

صباحنا من الامل

Saturday November 23 1996
Albania D 6.60
Andorra FF 10
Australia AS 2.20
Austria S 13.50
Belgium BF 35
Bolivia B 1.50
Canada C 1.50
Czech Republic KC50
Denmark DK 15
Ecuador E 1.50
Finland F 10
France FF 10
Germany DM 3.20
Greece D 4.00
Hong Kong HK 2.50
Hungary H 10
Indonesia I 1.50
Italy L 3.00
Japan J 1.20
Korea K 1.50
Kuwait KD 0.50
Labrador LB 2.00
Latvia L 1.50
Lithuania LT 1.50
Luxembourg L 1.50
Malaysia M 1.50
Malta M 1.50
Mauritius M 1.50
Mexico MX 1.50
Morocco M 1.50
Netherlands G 4.00
New Zealand NZ 1.50
Norway N 1.50
Oman O 1.50
Pakistan P 1.50
Peru P 1.50
Portugal P 2.00
Romania R 1.50
Russia R 1.50
Saudi Arabia R 1.50
Singapore S 1.50
South Africa R 1.50
Spain S 1.50
Sweden S 1.50
Switzerland SF 3.20
Taiwan T 1.50
Thailand TH 1.50
Turkey TL 1.50
USA US 2.76

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
46,718

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Britain's gun lovers set their sights overseas
Targeting France
The Week page 15

Joanna Coles meets Lucy Lambton
Joyfully banking
The Week page 15

Sport
Cork pulls out of the England tour
The Week page 20

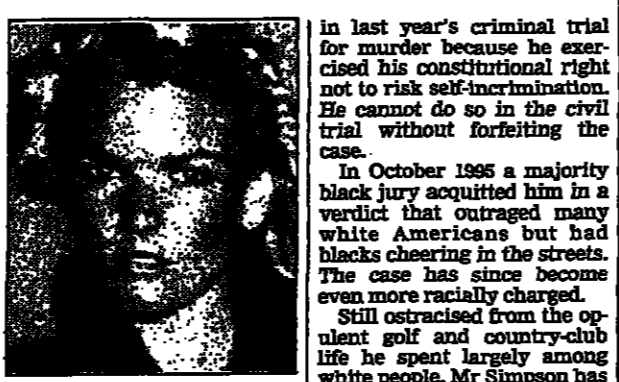
Fallen American football star takes the stand



OJ Simpson arrives at court in Santa Monica, California, yesterday to testify at the civil trial. PHOTOGRAPH: MARK TERPIL

OJ admits 'getting physical'

Simpson testifies under oath for the first time as America relives its trial of the century



Nicole Brown Simpson: evidence of prior beatings

At one point he admitted 'getting physical', saying: 'I pushed her out the door if that's what you mean.' He later said he had 'wrestled her out of the room' and had her 'in a head lock'.

In last year's criminal trial for murder, Simpson exercised his constitutional right not to risk self-incrimination. He cannot do so in the civil trial without forfeiting the case.

Clarke cuts deep to fund lower taxes

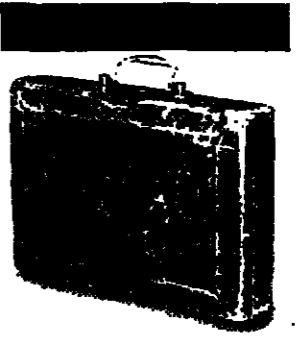
Savings drive prunes roads and housing

David Hencke, Larry Elliott and Michael White

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, will launch a crackdown on benefit fraud as the centrepiece of a £2 billion package of spending cuts in Tuesday's Budget designed to pay for a 1p cut in the basic rate of income tax.

George Young, the Transport Secretary - agreed to further cuts to their programmes.

Mr Gummer has sacrificed another £250 million from the housing budget, which has suffered the largest cuts of any service. Since 1992 the Housing Corporation, which funds all cheap rented housing, has seen its budget cut from £2.36 billion to £1.07 billion.



Budget

The Guardian's unsurpassed team of political, economic and financial writers will provide comprehensive analysis on Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's pre-election budget in Wednesday's and Thursday's Guardian International.

PM faces defeat in Euro debate

Michael White Political Editor

THE Government was last night facing the prospect of near-certain defeat over Europe next week after John Major's determination not to concede a Commons debate on the terms for a single currency pushed Tory Eurosceptics into the waiting arms of Tony Blair.

Most bank and building society deposit accounts pay interest at a rate close to inflation.

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'Overdose' pills curb is sought

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

HEALTH officials plan to order a reduction from 25 to 12 in the maximum number of paracetamol or aspirin tablets sold in shops in an attempt to stop people taking overdoses.

The Medicines Control Agency also wants to add mandatory warnings on paracetamol packets of the dangers of an overdose. The changes would take effect next April.

The proposals, issued yesterday for consultation, follow concern that the number of paracetamol overdoses has reached 30,000 a year. More than 100 people die as a result, but others who survive suffer liver failure and may require a £40,000 transplant.

Experts say liver failure can be caused by an overdose of 20 tablets.

At present, shops can sell paracetamol and aspirin in packs of 25, though a third pack, ibuprofen, is limited to 12. Pharmacists can sell by discretion in unlimited quantities.

The agency is proposing an across-the-board limit of 12 for all shop packs of analgesics and 30 for packs sold in pharmacies. However, pharmacists could sell quantities of up to 100 where they judge it appropriate for people with chronic or recurrent conditions.

Paracetamol packs would carry a new warning stating: "Immediate advice should be sought in the event of an overdose, even if you do not feel unwell."

Patient advice leaflets would also contain a statement saying: "Immediate medical advice should be sought in the event of an overdose because of the risk of serious liver damage."

The agency is stressing that analgesic medicines are "extremely safe in normal usage". Its proposals are aimed at reinforcing safe use "in the light of concerns about their relative toxicity".

Gerald Malone, Health Minister, said there were particular anxieties about the dangers of a paracetamol overdose, the symptoms of which might not be readily apparent. "The way forward is to ensure that full and accurate information reaches consumers. That information should be conveyed both on the label and in a patient leaflet, in a pack whose size meets their needs without leaving large numbers in the bathroom cabinet."

Doctors welcomed yesterday's move. Dr Gary Bray, consultant gastro-enterologist at Southend hospital, Essex, described it as an "entirely sensible control of a potentially lethal compound".

Many overdoses were cries for help, Dr Bray said. "They take it, don't know what's going to happen, and a day or two later their liver fails and it may be too late to save them. They didn't want to kill themselves, regretted it, but went into a coma."

The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA), representing 10,000 pharmacists, welcomed the proposals but called for an even tougher move to ban sales of paracetamol in shops and supermarkets.

The consultation continues until January 10.

Troops stand by for Miss World siege

Suzanne Goldenberg in Bangalore

CAVORTING on a Hollywood version of an ancient Indian temple, hundreds of dancers, two elephants and 88 contestants were last night put through their paces for tonight's final of the Miss World pageant.

"Remember all that really counts is Saturday night," a choreographer said, draping his arm around a dancer sobbing with nerves and tension.

But the drama has already started outside, where 10,000 troops have transformed Bangalore into a virtual police state to prevent protesters — including a women's suicide squad — from disrupting the pageant. Thirty-five activists were arrested. Others, including K. N. Sasikala, who claims to have 15 women ready to die to stop the show, are on the run.

Feminists, communists and the rightwing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have condemned the pageant, held for the first and perhaps last time in India, as an attempt to import a permissive, consumer-driven culture, and as an insult to local tradition.

Their campaign claimed its first victim last week when a lone protester, a 15-year-old girl, was killed in a stampede at a bus stand in the southern city of Madurai.

Bangalore's police chief, S. C. Burman, is intent on sparing India the embarrassment of a violent protest broadcast live to what organisers say will be a television audience of 2 billion.

Aside from the rapid action force in electric-blue camouflage uniform outside the stadium, the road outside the contestants' hotel is off-limits. Schools and colleges were closed yesterday and today.

Police with sniffer dogs have searched the stadium for several nights. Reporters have been subjected to rigorous security checks, asked to remove their shoes and fan out bank notes in their wallets. Pens and notebooks have been banned from the final, and ticket-holders told to arrive empty-handed.

But the contest could still be upstaged by the BJP's call for a 24-hour strike starting at



Contestants for tonight's Miss World 1996 rehearse in Bangalore, where 10,000 troops are on standby. PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJESH SHETTY

down today, and an alternative pageant crowning Misses Poverty and Illiteracy.

"We will block all vehicles throughout the city," said the BJP MP Anand Kumar, who is organising the strike. "We are going to lay siege to the stadium and request the so-

called spectators not to go." The BJP is the unofficial patron of obscure groups like the Sasikala's 15 Women Ready to Die, which claims to have assembled 400 commandos to sabotage the event. Their protest has eclipsed the arguments of leftwing and women's organisations.

Although the supreme court yesterday lifted some legal restrictions on the pageant, it came too late for Amritha Bachchan, the box-office star who brought the show to India after four years at South Africa's Sun City.

Mr Bachchan said he felt slugged that on Thursday, the organisers turned 25 vans into mobile box offices, with the cheapest seats at 2,000 rupees (€38) and the most expensive more than 10 times that price. This is an event for the seriously rich.

However, the panic about a possible public suicide has transformed a contest, which after 45 years had become an anticlimax, into an event of international importance — a fact acknowledged by the BJP. "This has attracted world attention. It will catch the eyes of the all. Catch me a small fish and it is no use," said Pramila Nesargi, a member of the Karnataka assembly.

Even the contest organisers agreed. "I'd like you to be here just for Miss World, but unfortunately that's not possible in it," said Julia Morley, the contest organiser.

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Bangalore's police chief is intent on sparing India the embarrassment of violence seen live by 2 billion people.

S. C. Burman, is intent on sparing India the embarrassment of a violent protest broadcast live to what organisers say will be a television audience of 2 billion.

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1
8.00am The Pink Panther Show. 8.30am News. 9.00am The Real Adventures of Jimmy Neutron. 9.30am The Simpsons. 10.15am Live Aid. 1.15pm News. 1.45pm Grandstand. 6.55pm The Simpsons. 7.00pm The Simpsons. 7.15pm The Simpsons. 7.30pm The Simpsons. 7.45pm The Simpsons. 8.00pm The Simpsons. 8.15pm The Simpsons. 8.30pm The Simpsons. 8.45pm The Simpsons. 9.00pm The Simpsons. 9.15pm The Simpsons. 9.30pm The Simpsons. 9.45pm The Simpsons. 10.00pm The Simpsons. 10.15pm The Simpsons. 10.30pm The Simpsons. 10.45pm The Simpsons. 11.00pm The Simpsons. 11.15pm The Simpsons. 11.30pm The Simpsons. 11.45pm The Simpsons. 12.00am The Simpsons.

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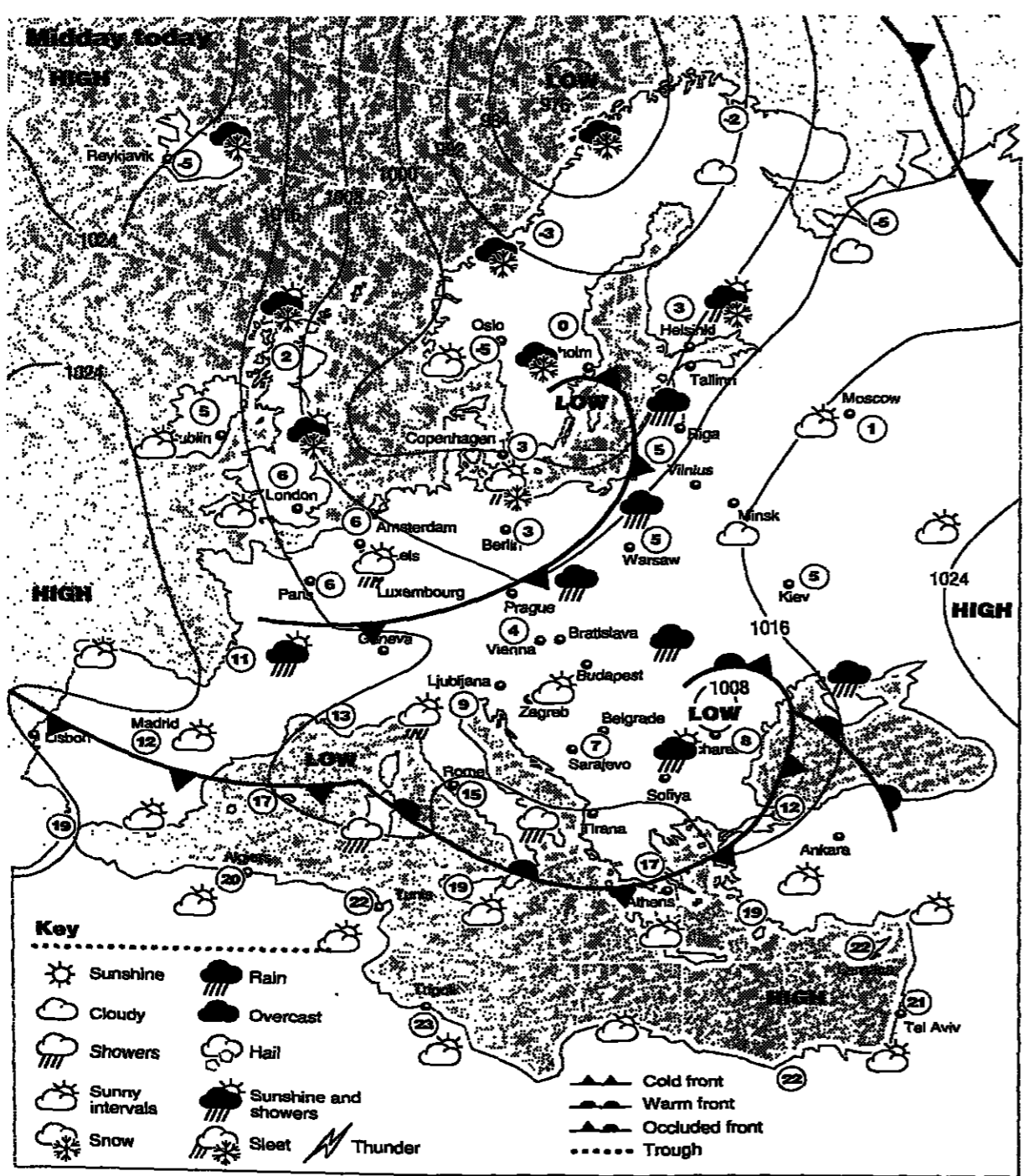
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The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

City	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
London	12-18	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20	15-21
Paris	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Berlin	10-16	8-14	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19
Moscow	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Amsterdam	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Brussels	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Copenhagen	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Stockholm	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Helsinki	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Warsaw	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Vienna	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Budapest	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Zagreb	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Sofia	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Ankara	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Tel Aviv	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20

Around the world

City	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
London	12-18	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20	15-21
Paris	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Berlin	10-16	8-14	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19
Moscow	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Amsterdam	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Brussels	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
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Stockholm	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
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Warsaw	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Vienna	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Budapest	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Zagreb	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Sofia	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Ankara	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20
Tel Aviv	11-17	9-15	10-16	11-17	12-18	13-19	14-20

European weather outlook

It will be a cold and wintry weekend for most places with sunny spells and snow showers, although some longer spells of sleet or snow are expected across southern Sweden at first. Max temp -3 to +6C.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland
A cold front over northern Germany and the Low Countries will move slowly southwards during the day. That means northern regions will start cloudy with showers bursts of rain and sleet, but it should brighten up in the afternoon. Meanwhile, southern Germany, Austria and Switzerland will start fine and frosty but rain, sleet or snow will break out this afternoon. Max temp 3-8C.

Spain and Portugal
Early rain in the extreme south should clear to leave a chilly day across all of France with a mix of sunshine and showers. Most of the showers will be in the north at first, but these will move southwards this afternoon. Max temp 6-13C from north to south.

Spain and Portugal
A band of showers in the north at first will sink southwards during the day with brighter weather following on behind. However the extreme south of Spain should stay mostly fine and warm with sunny spells. Max temp 10-15C but nearer 20C on the south coast.

Italy
Dry at first in most places but a band of heavy rain will spread from the west to all but the far north. Max temp 5-10C.

Greece
Northern Greece will be cloudy and damp with rain at times, but the south should stay dry with some heavy sunshine. Max temp 10-15C.

Blair's keeps desert island silence

Don Gleibner

JOHN MAJOR started with Rhapsody in Blue and finished his selection with The Best is Yet to Come. But Tony Blair's choice of eight records, a book and a luxury for Desert Island Discs remained a mystery yesterday.

Mr Blair left Breakfast House yesterday morning after recording the programme looking "pretty pleased with himself" according to one observer.

Desert Island Discs has become something of a ritual for politicians of all hues. "It's like being asked to be in Who's Who," said disc jockey John Peel, who has himself appeared on the programme as just another aspect of marketing.

Mr Blair was accompanied for the recording by his press spokesman Alistair Campbell. "I would imagine that it's something over which they've agonised for some time in the month or so," said John Peel.

Certainly Mr Blair's choice will be examined closely for any indications of political expediency. Money's Too Tight To Mention, for example, may no longer send out the right economic message with an election only months away. Queen's We Are The Champions, which was used in Labour's disastrous Sheffield rally before the last election, is unlikely to be chosen, while I'm A Union Man by the Strawbs is out of the question.

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Blair keeps desert island silence



Diane Blood... denounced 'incredible' bureaucracy

'There is a clear requirement for the written and effective consent of a man after he has had the opportunity to receive counselling and after he has had a proper opportunity to consider the implications of a posthumous birth'

HFEA statement giving reasons for export refusal



An IVF technician at work. Diane Blood may yet go for IVF, where some clinicians would prefer to be left to get on with the job unfettered by ethics

How ethics and the law joined a fight for new life after death

The case of Diane Blood looks set for appeal. But as science rushes forward, two branches of the medical establishment are in conflict over one of the most difficult questions of the age

Clare Dyer, Sarah Bosley and Tim Radford

THE legal wrangle over the case of Diane Blood, prevented from using her dead husband's sperm to have his child, is set to go to the Court of Appeal and possibly all the way to the European Court of Human Rights after the latest decision that she cannot be allowed to export the sperm to Belgium and use it there.

Last night the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) set out in full its reasons for the decision, which were centred on the complex issue of patient consent and denounced by Mrs Blood as "incredibly bureaucratic."

Thursday, the authority told her she would not be allowed to use her husband Stephen's sperm — removed from him 18 months ago as he lay dying in a coma — for artificial insemination abroad.

The reasons released last night made clear that Mr Blood's lack of consent was at the heart of its refusal. The authority made no new points, but reiterated the arguments it advanced when Mrs Blood challenged its earlier refusal in the High Court last month.

In a letter to Mrs Blood's solicitors, the authority said the "important requirements" laid down by Parliament that a sperm donor must have the opportunity of counselling and consent to consider the implications of a posthumous birth had not been met in the Bloods' case.

It would not be "right to allow Mrs Blood to export the sperm to avoid the specific requirements which prevent her from using the sperm in this country", and she had no prior connection with any country to which she wants to export the sperm.

to identify a person's wishes from the evidence of another person." It also "bore in mind that Mr Blood had not given any consideration, let alone consent, to the export of his sperm to another country."

The authority is thought to have been influenced in its decision by a letter faxed to it at 10pm on Tuesday night by Stuart Horner, chairman of the British Medical Association's ethics committee, urging it not to change its mind.

The letter reached Mrs Blood's solicitors after 5pm on Wednesday with a request for her comments by 1pm on Thursday, an hour before the HFEA's meeting.

Dr Horner wrote: "We believe that the doctrine of informed consent, which is central to medical ethics, must not be eroded."

"I think it's a tragic case and I wouldn't for a moment cast doubt on what Mrs Blood is saying. But it is a fundamental principle of the act that there must be firm evidence of consent."

The HFEA is a constraining influence and a frequent irritant on the fertility specialists, who spend their lives pushing at the frontiers of the scientifically possible. They do not want it replaced, for fear of something worse, but find themselves in constant arguments with the regulatory body.

Lord Winston's bill — to amend the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act so that written consent is not always needed for the use of sperm — is a manifestation of that edgy relationship. It will receive its second reading in the House of Lords on December 10.

Dr Horner went on: "Law and ethics should not be adjusted to accommodate iso-

lated cases... There will always be a new case to challenge the previously accepted view and to evoke our sympathy. The inevitable consequence will be a steady erosion of ethical standards."

Dr Horner initially raised the spectre of organs being taken from unconscious patients for transplant, but last night he accepted that clear rules exist under which patients must be declared brain dead before an organ can be removed.

But he insisted: "We are concerned that these individual cases, which we are told should be resolved on their merits, create a de facto precedent in which doctors never know which mine is going to explode. As a professional organisation we have to try to prevent that happening."

Last month, the High Court upheld the HFEA's contention that the Act of Parliament which set it up bans a wife's use of her dead husband's sperm in Britain without his written consent. But the authority has a discretion to waive its own rule that sperm should be exported for use abroad where the use is unlawful in Britain. After the High Court ruling, it agreed to reconsider the ban on export after a public outcry over Mrs Blood's plight.

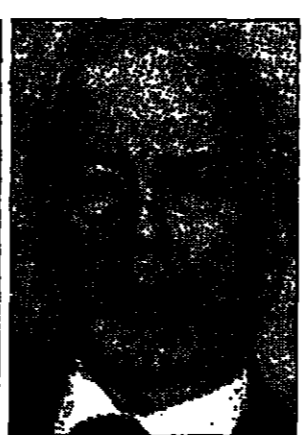
Margaret Brazier, professor of law at Manchester University and an expert on medical law and ethics, last night backed the HFEA's stance. "I think the authority is right. I don't think the legislation should be changed either," she said.

"I think it's a tragic case and I wouldn't for a moment cast doubt on what Mrs Blood is saying. But it is a fundamental principle of the act that there must be firm evidence of consent."

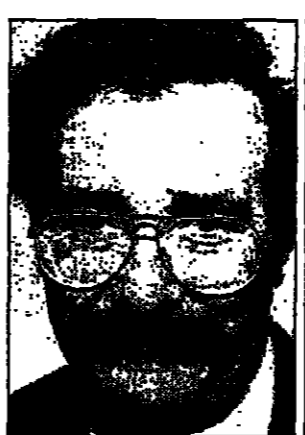
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Dr Stuart Horner... no legal exceptions for isolated cases



Lord Winston... bill stands little chance of becoming law

proach. The clinicians say their interest lies in helping sometimes desperate individuals to fulfil themselves through having children, and are impatient of the inhuman general ethical principles that get in the way.

Lord Winston makes the point that Diane Blood was given no chance to give oral evidence in front of the HFEA, the BMA or in court. "It would be quite unacceptable in the normal court of law or in a select committee of Parliament," he said. "Oral evidence gives a flavour of the bonafide of what is being said... Mrs Blood begged the HFEA to be heard directly and that was turned down almost as if they were frightened of hearing from the woman."

"In all this, what are we worried about? What are the concerns? Is it the welfare of the child, who is going to be born? Here is a responsible woman who has adequate financial support, who has one of the most supportive families around her, including her dead husband's family. There cannot be any serious concern about the child."

Dr Horner fundamentally disagrees, although this is not the reason why the committee made its recommendation. This is the one issue on which it parts company with the HFEA. "The HFEA believes that the interests of children should be taken into account and the BMA policy is that the interests of the child are paramount," said Dr Horner.

"For a pregnant woman to have her husband die from a disease like meningitis is an unmitigated tragedy for two people... to my mind it would be difficult to argue that it would not also be a tragedy for the child to be born."

The conflict comes from a fundamental difference of ap-

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The conflict comes from a fundamental difference of ap-

How nature adds obstacles on path to pregnancy

Tim Radford on the role chance plays in artificial insemination

IF DIANE Blood is successful in getting permission to use her late husband's sperm for artificial insemination, she will have cleared only one hurdle. Nature provides others.

A teaspoon full of semen from a fertile male contains between 180 and 350 million sperm. Even so, there are no guarantees. In healthy couples there is only an 18 per cent chance of pregnancy each month.

But in 40 per cent of infertile couples, the male's sperm count is low to begin with. Fertility is a chance event, and a low sperm count makes it even more haphazard. Artificial insemination is a familiar and, in theory, simple technique, involving the insertion of donor sperm into the vagina with a syringe or straw.

According to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), there is only a 7.9 per cent success rate for donor insemination. But the HFEA's figures are for people who had problems to start with. Lord Winston, who as Professor Robert Winston of Hammersmith hospital was one of the pioneers of fertility research, thinks there ought to be no problems.

"She doesn't even need a doctor," he said yesterday. She could do it herself, by putting the container of sperm on the kitchen table for a few minutes to defrost, and then inseminating herself with a straw. She doesn't need specialist help, he said. There was no suggestion that either of the Bloods was of abnormal fertility.

But if artificial insemination does not work, there are various forms of *in vitro*

fertilisation. In these, the woman is given drugs to provoke the production of eggs — collected in a relatively simple, swift operation — to be fertilised in a laboratory dish. Because the technique only works about one time in six, more than one egg is usually implanted back in the uterus; others can be frozen and stored in case the first attempts fail.

IVF is expensive. In a recent book, Lord Winston put the cost at anything between £1,400 and £2,200. Ordinary seminal fluid will not do the trick. The semen has to be filtered and the sperm separated from dead blood cells and dead sperm. The fertilised eggs are then kept for a few days, in the laboratory, in fluids that embryos need for growth, at body temperatures. The best embryos are selected and gently returned through the cervix to the uterus.

It could be done "naturally" by collecting an egg produced normally and fertilising it. If that doesn't work — and it usually doesn't — then expensive drugs are used to trigger greater numbers of eggs. There is a choice of approaches. In one, eggs are mixed with sperm and returned to the Fallopian tubes before fertilisation. In another, sperm is injected directly into the egg to make sure it gets to the right place.

But there is no guarantee of success. A study in the *Lancet* today — based on a study of 37,000 cycles of IVF between 1991 and 1994, collected by the HFEA — confirms that women of 25-30 stand a 16 per cent chance of becoming pregnant by IVF. The success rate falls sharply with age. A woman of 40 has a 7 per cent chance.

There is another statistic to remember — even if matters begin well, they can end badly: 10 to 15 per cent of all pregnancies abort spontaneously, for reasons that doctors still do not understand.

Doctors never know which mine is going to explode next



The HFEA is society's attempt to catch up with science of human life. The world's first "test tube" baby, Louise Brown, was born in 1978 after conception by IVF. By 1988, the British pioneers of the technique were celebrating their 1,000th birth and, worldwide, there were already 10,000 IVF babies. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill was not published until 1990, and the authority itself not established until 1990. By that time research was raising questions and dilemmas undreamed of in 1978 — or even 1980.

Professor Ian Craft, direc- Martin Kettle, page 9

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4 BRITAIN

News in brief

BA error as missile explodes below jet

THE crew of a British Airways jumbo jet saw a missile explode 10,000ft beneath them after the company ignored a special warning notice and routed the aircraft close to a banned military area near Istanbul in Turkey on its June 4 flight from Islamabad, Pakistan, to Manchester, BA admitted yesterday. A second BA flight, from Bangkok to London, which would have passed through the same area, was re-routed.

BA said the mistake occurred because staff had failed to put the information into a computer responsible for the flight plan. It said that no one had been in danger and it was reviewing its procedures for military danger notices, which are routinely sent to its navigation and flight crew briefing departments in London.

On this occasion, both departments forgot to enter the information received several days before from Turkish authorities into the computer which produces flight plans. Turkish air traffic control told the Boeing 747 to divert around the firing zone just as the crew saw the explosion. — Keith Harper

Repossession plight eased

THOUSANDS of homeowners living under the threat of repossession because of mortgage arrears may be allowed to remain in their property until its sale, following a landmark court ruling. Most mortgage lenders insist on selling the annual toll of around 50,000 repossessed homes as vacant properties, often at 15 to 20 per cent below their market value — a loss borrowers must bear. But an Appeal Court ruling earlier this month, in a case involving Cheltenham & Gloucester, suggests a county court judge may direct a lender to suspend the possession of a home until completion of the sale. Yesterday, the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux said judges might now be persuaded to allow borrowers to stay in their homes while the lender conducts the sale, provided they agree to co-operate with the lender's plans — so making "the best of a bad lot" for those facing inevitable repossession. — Richard Miles

Road protest 'final warning'

ANTI-roads protesters were yesterday served with a "final warning" giving them 48 hours to remove themselves and their possessions from camps on the route of the A30 dual carriageway scheme in east Devon where they have built a network of tunnels and aerial walkways in a bid to prevent work on the 13-mile route between Honiton and Exeter.

A spokesman for the contractors' consortium, Connect, said if they failed to respond to yesterday's notice from the Under Sheriff, such action as was necessary would be taken to enforce their right of possession. — Geoffrey Gibbs

Sex pest collapses in court

A CHILD sex pest with a history of offences dating back nearly 30 years collapsed at Reading crown court after being jailed for 4½ years for indecent assaults on four young girls. David York, 59, a former labourer from Bracknell, Berkshire, admitted four counts of indecent assault dating back to February 1979. He asked for 11 other charges to be taken into account. The court heard York was convicted of indecent exposure by Bracknell magistrates in February 1970, followed by a string of other indecency offences.

Student's body found

THE body of Swiss student John Newton, 23, from Geneva, has been found by an RAF helicopter after a three-day search involving 20 of the Skye mountain rescue team, four search and rescue dogs, coastguard shore patrols, and coastguard and RAF helicopters on the island of Skye. The search for the solo holidaymaker began after his hired car was found abandoned at the start of a track to the village of Talisker, a well-used tourist path. His father Tony, a British engineer, and his Malaysian mother have gone to Skye to help police with their inquiries. It is believed Mr Newton may have fallen from cliffs while viewing a waterfall that plunges into the sea.

Couple jailed for £10m fraud

PETER Garnett, 54, and his 52-year-old wife Linda, were each jailed for 3½ years at Middlesex Guildhall crown court yesterday for a £10 million plot involving the only cheque ever stolen from the Bank of England.

Channel Tunnel update

THE advertisements for Le Shuttle appearing on pages 20 and 21 of Weekend magazine and for Eurostar on page 7 of The Guide today, were printed before the Channel Tunnel fire. We would like to point out that there are no passenger services until further notice.

TOMORROW

'She tasted of a hot summer breeze on a Cornish estuary. Ozone and iodine, kelp and candyfloss'

Rushdie, Okri, Ballard, Lessing: Who is worst at sex?

THE FIRST SUNDAY PAPER, AND THE MOST ORIGINAL

The Observer



Mr Speakman's home in Ramsgate, Kent, where his body was found by his daughter and where he kept his collection of guns in locked cabinets. PHOTOGRAPH: BILL GRAHAM

Raiders murder pensioner for gun collection

LUKE HARDING

AN 84-year-old man who lived alone was beaten and strangled by burglars for his collection of guns, police said yesterday.

Kenneth Speakman, a retired town clerk, was attacked near his home in Ramsgate, Kent, and forced to open the locked cabinets where the guns were stored. The gang made off with 12 handguns, including a .38 Smith and Wesson, as well as a number of antique weapons. Mr Speakman's body was found in the lounge of his home by his daughter, Penny Russell, at 7pm on Wednesday. She had come to take him to visit his wife, Joanna, in the nursing home where she has lived since suffering a stroke three years ago.



Kenneth Speakman: a "responsible gun owner"

the inquiry, described the murder as "dreadful" and said the killers had been motivated by their victim's gun collection. "It appears Mr Speakman was beaten near his front door and taken into various rooms in the house which

were searched. Mr Speakman kept his guns locked in secure cabinets in accordance with firearms regulations. These cabinets had been opened and it appears 12 guns and some ammunition has been taken.

Mr Speakman was well-known in the area as a firearms enthusiast. He had been an active member of Ramsgate Gun Club and had held a firearms certificate for more than 20 years.

"He was a fit and active man who was very keen on hunting and a respected member of the gun community," Mr Biddis said. "He would have, in all probability, put up some sort of verbal or physical resistance to the intruders."

Detectives fear the guns may have ended up in the hands of an organised criminal gang. Most of the weapons were of a calibre which MPs have voted to ban.

Anti-gun campaigners said the fact that Mr Speakman



Detective Superintendent Nick Biddis shows some of the types of handgun stolen

was murdered for his weapons strengthened the case for a complete ban on handguns in homes.

Jacqueline Walsh, of the Dunblane Snowdrop petition, said: "We have always asked that private ownership of handguns be made illegal and other guns should be locked up in gun clubs rather than peoples' homes."

"People obviously knew he had them. It's natural people do tell other people about their hobbies."

Labour's home affairs spokesman, Doug Henderson, said the case "should remind everyone in Parliament of the need to bring about a speedy change in the law to ban the holding of hand guns at home."

Mr Speakman's wife has been told of his death. Neighbours yesterday described him as a "real old-fashioned gentleman".

Detectives said he was a responsible firearms owner who showed off replica guns as a hobby. He was also a member of the Ramsgate and Sporting Gun Club and the Sixth Thanet Rifle Club.

Schools inspector to be investigated

DONALD MACLEOD Education Correspondent

THE Office for Standards in Education is to investigate complaints about the "negative" approach of a registered inspector.

A complaint to Ofsted against Geoffrey Owen by a Birmingham primary school has been backed by the education authority. It follows claims by four primary headteachers in London and Basingstoke, Hampshire, of "intimidatory, high-handed and bullying" behaviour dur-

ing visits by Mr Owen. Ofsted investigated those charges, but a spokesman said yesterday that no substantial evidence was found to justify de-registering Mr Owen. It was unusual for one inspector to attract a series of complaints, but his work had been monitored like that of all registered inspectors and found to be satisfactory.

Governors of Rookery Junior School, in Handsworth, Birmingham, complained to Ofsted that Mr Owen's inspection was a "travesty" after he declared it a failing school requiring

special measures. They are joint governors of the adjacent Rookery Infants School which received a good report from a different inspector team.

Yesterday Mr Owen refused to comment on the allegations. Cambridge Education Associates, the contractor which employs him, said his verdict that Rookery primary was failing and required special measures had been confirmed by a follow-up visit by HM inspectors.

"We will let the Ofsted investigation take its course and then review the situa-

tion," said John Bridger, the firm's general manager.

Three other primary schools in the city complained to the authority, prompting Birmingham's chief adviser, David Woods, to protest to Ofsted about Mr Owen's "negative view of inspection". Mr Woods said yesterday: "We have no argument with the idea that weaknesses must be identified and we are not pretending that these schools are perfect, but we were surprised by his verdicts."

Last year Hillbrook grant-maintained primary, in

Wandsworth, London, was judged by Mr Owen to be failing and in need of special measures but HM inspectors overruled his verdict.

Hampshire county council complained to Ofsted after Mr Owen inspected South View primary in Basingstoke, alleging he failed to back his conclusions with hard evidence during the feedback meeting to governors, and his team seemed determined to seek out negative aspects.

The Ofsted spokesman said about 100 of 6,000 annual inspections led to investigations.

2,000 Scottish postal workers to continue unofficial strike

NEARLY 2,000 postal staff in the east of Scotland were last night continuing an unofficial strike in a row over 10 casual workers taken on yesterday at Edinburgh's main sorting office, after 350 workers at a meeting in the city unanimously refused a call by Communication Workers' Union officials to return to work.

As a result, most of Edinburgh, as well as Dumfermline and parts of Kirkcaldy in Fife, will not receive post for a second day.

After the vote, a spokesman for Royal Mail management said: "This is yet another kick in the teeth for our customers and clear evidence the local CWU branch is out of step with its national leadership."

John Kegie, CWU representative for Scotland and Northern Ireland, said members are determined to stay out, even though they do not have the union's support. He warned that the action could spread if postal staff elsewhere in Scotland are asked to handle East Coast mail.

Texaco and Gulf fined £100,000 each after Wales refinery explosion

GEORGE GIBBS

OIL giants Texaco and Gulf were fined £100,000 each yesterday as a result of the huge explosion and fires that hit the Pembroke refinery in West Wales two years ago. The blast injured 26 workers and caused extensive damage. Swansea crown court heard that the explosion, felt three

miles away in Milford Haven, was caused by technical faults and the failure of control room staff to shut down the plant following alarm signals.

The companies, who run the refinery in partnership, admitted breaches of health and safety regulations arising from the blast. They were also ordered to share payment of £143,700 prosecution costs.

Mr Justice Morland said the fine had to reflect public concern and condemnation of breaches of health and safety legislation. He accepted that no individual could be blamed. Rather, it was a failure to make a correct diagnosis of earlier problems that had affected the plant following a severe electrical thunderstorm which caused power cuts at the refinery.

The mixture ignited near a heating unit sending a 100ft fireball through a processing unit and starting several fires.

No one was killed, but workers were blown off their feet and badly shocked. The companies paid out some

£180,000 compensation for damage to public property.

The court was told a £2 million improved monitoring system had since been installed at the refinery to prevent a similar accident taking place.

Texaco and Gulf admitted two charges each of failing to ensure the reasonable safety of their employees, contractors and the public.

Bell slates 'neutral reporting'

ANDREW GULF Media Correspondent

MARTIN Bell, the veteran foreign correspondent, clashed yesterday with a colleague on the BBC to abandon neutrality in reporting war and genocide. "But his call was criticised as misguided by Lucian Hudson, a senior editor on the 24-hour international news channel, BBC World, who said he sounded like a priest keen to abandon celibacy."

"I do not believe we should stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, aggressor and victim," he told News World '96, a conference attended by 500 international news broadcasters in Berlin. "I do not believe we should stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, aggressor and victim," he told News World '96, a conference attended by 500 international news broadcasters in Berlin. "I do not believe we should stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, aggressor and victim," he told News World '96, a conference attended by 500 international news broadcasters in Berlin.

— Martin Bell



Vietnamese children fleeing napalm. Martin Bell said neutral reporting posed a 'real problem'. PHOTOGRAPH RIGHTS: NICK HUT

BBC. In war zones I only have to watch my front. The International Red Cross has been through exactly the same debate about its neutrality in an age when genocide has returned to haunt two of our continents.

"It is a real problem we should address: my answer is what I call the journalism of attachment, journalism which cares as well as knows."

It was a limited way of trying to use the world's most powerful medium to help. "It means you don't have to hide behind some notion of journalistic immunity if you are asked to give evidence to the

war crimes tribunal." He remained committed to the old-fashioned notions of impartiality, fairness and concern for the facts.

Mr Bell, who has covered news in more than 80 countries and was wounded in Sarajevo four years ago, said he was not a crusading journalist. But he had nothing to apologise for if he could force governments in Rwanda and Bosnia to help people. "I will happily call myself a founder member of the something-must-be-done campaign."

He underlined his resignation last month because he felt sidelined after leaving Bosnia.

Yesterday he said he would be leaving on January 1 unless the BBC found him something to do.

Rolling news meant journalists standing on a rooftop doing 15 "live shots" one after another, reciting words fed into an earpiece by a producer in London, instead of finding out what was happening.

"That is not journalism, that is puppetry. It is the danger of rolling news: it puts pressure on you for this kind of nonsense."

Mr Hudson said that the "journalism of attachment" was very risky. "He sounds to me like a celibate priest who at

a certain stage in his life has decided to go and bunk. The temptation to get engaged is just too great and he wants to get stuck in."

Journalists should not forget the fundamental role of holding a mirror up to the world. The growth of rolling news was unavoidable and the days of fixed bulletins such as the Nine O'Clock News were numbered.

"I think that is a golden age that has now gone. It is unavoidable now to report news as it happens," said Mr Hudson. BBC News said talks were continuing about what Mr Bell could do.

Ghosts that OJ must finally lay to rest

Former American sports hero O. J. Simpson was examined in a civil trial yesterday — the first time he has given evidence about the death of his ex-wife Nicole and her male friend.

From Los Angeles, Christopher Reed poses the 10 most difficult questions he faces

1. Where was Mr Simpson between 10pm and 11pm — the estimated time of the murders — on June 12 1994?
In the criminal trial his defence counsel, Johnnie Cochran, said he was chipping golf balls at this home in Brentwood, Los Angeles. His chauffeur, Allen Park, who waited for about half an hour outside the house and rang the bell repeatedly without getting an answer, said Mr Simpson told him he was asleep. But Mr Allen says that when Mr Simpson claims he was asleep, he saw a tall dark man walk into the house. Who was the man and what was he doing?

2. How did Ronald Goldman's blood get into Mr Simpson's Bronco, and why was his own blood found at the murder scene?
DNA evidence gave odds of many billions to one against any of the blood samples found at the murder scene belonging to anyone other than the three people involved — Mr Simpson, his ex-wife Nicole and her friend Ronald Goldman. Three stains inside the

Bronco were a mixture of Mr Simpson's blood and the two victims'. How could the police have planted them when the Bronco was locked?

3. Why did he say he had never owned a pair of Lorenzo-style Bruno Magli Italian shoes which had a unique sole pattern?
Bloody footprints at the murder scene came from these shoes, only 299 pairs were sold in his size 12 in the United States. At the criminal trial, the prosecution failed to link the shoes to him, and in a sworn statement before the civil trial he denied having ever owned such "ugly" items of footwear. This time the court has been shown a photograph of him wearing shoes identified as the Bruno Magli pair at a football match in 1993. As someone who took great trouble with his appearance, how did he not remember wearing them?

4. How does he explain the similarity between the gloves he was photographed wearing several times before the mur-



Simpson: Was he chipping golf balls at his home?



Nicole: She bought unusual gloves from Bloomingdale's



Ronald Goldman: His blood was found in Simpson's car

ders and the bloodstained ones found at the murder scene and behind his house? The gloves were extra large — his size. The criminal trial evidence showed that Nicole bought such a pair, with a unique stitching pattern, at Bloomingdale's in New York just before Christmas 1990. Only 200 such pairs were sold in the US that year.

5. How did he cut his hands?
On the night of the murder, he cut the knuckle of the

middle finger on his left hand. Blood from the cut tallies with the spots found on the left footprint of the departing murderer. He told police he did not know how he cut his finger. In a later, revised account, he said he cut it in a Chicago hotel by banging down a glass when police telephoned him about Nicole's murder. In yet another version, he said he reopened the cut in Chicago after injuring himself in LA while rummaging in his car.

A doctor who examined him the day after the murders found three other cuts and seven abrasions on his hands. How did they appear?

6. Why did he behave so oddly after the murders?
On the drive to the airport at 11pm on the night of the murder, he told the driver to open the windows because he was hot and sweating. But it was a cool night and the air conditioning was on. On the flight to Chicago, he

constantly drank water and went to the lavatory every 15 minutes. When police telephoned him to say his ex-wife had been killed, he did not ask how. Nor did he ask about his two children, whose names were sleeping at Nicole's house.

7. Why did he write an apparent suicide note?
His friend Robert Kardashian read the letter in public after Mr Simpson lied when he heard he was to be arrested. Dated two days previously, it reeked of guilt.

8. Where was he going before the notorious police chase?
In his Bronco, driven by a friend, he was photographed holding a gun to his head. The vehicle contained a false beard and mustache, a passport, fresh underwear, and \$8,750 (£5,800) in cash. A receipt showed the disguise was bought two weeks before the murders.

He was going to take his children to Disneyland and did not want fans recognising him. But he loved being recognised, and always signed autographs.

9. What was in the garment bag Mr Kardashian took away, and where is the small bag that vanished?
His house guest Brian "Kato" Kaelin helped him to load five bags into the car. Mr Simpson told him not to touch the smallest one. The bag was never seen again. When he returned from Chicago, Mr Kardashian walked off with one of the bags by mistake. It sat in his garage for weeks. Mr Kardashian has said that it contained nothing suspicious. If Mr Simpson was so unconcerned about that missing bag, why did he insist on accompanying Mr Kardashian to LA airport to collect his golf clubs the day after his wife had been murdered?

10. What about the polygraph test and the tape recording?
It has only recently been disclosed that shortly after the murders he took a lie detector test and failed. What were the questions and were there answers? And what did he say on a tape recording made at the Kardashian house before his arrest, a recording also recently discovered?

Asian near-neighbours aim for a footballing thaw in a frosty relationship going back generations

Sporting alliance faces stern test

As Korea and Japan eye the World Cup John Gittings in Seoul reports on a game of two halves

IT SAYS "2002 World Cup Korea" in shop windows, power bank counters, and on the in-flight screens of Korean Air. The official title of the event, carefully negotiated with the international governing body for association football, Fifa, is "2002 World Cup Korea-Japan", but somehow the second bit always seems to get left off.

Officially the agreement to become joint hosts of the World Cup is the prelude to a new, warm feeling between Korea and the power which brutally occupied the peninsula for 40 years. "It is the first project of fruitful collaboration between our two countries," says Oh Jee-chul, who is in charge of the international sports bureau at the ministry of culture and sports. It is high time, he claims, that Korea and Japan — "near neighbours and yet so remote" — should cross the football threshold of the 21st century together.

But he adds less confidently: "We don't yet know the real feeling of the Japanese." Some Seoul observers shake their heads with amazement that Korea gained the critical concession of its name being listed first. It also makes up in Korean eyes for not hosting the final.

But mutual understanding did not exactly blossom in the Seoul media when the decision was first announced. On television station reported that, by being awarded the opening ceremony, Korean culture would demonstrate its superiority across the world from Japan got a look-in. The South Korean president, Kim Young-sam, has been named chairman of the special government committee to oversee the preparations, and every

one of his ministers has orders to become involved. A special law will provide for South Korea's chaebols — the big business groups — to lend experts and give cash. The number of venues is not yet clear: Japan says it will select 10 cities, Korea will have the same number, or perhaps one more.

There is also the tricky question of mascots. Fifa has suggested each country has its own emblem, but bridge-building Korea favours a single "symbolic animal" for joint use. The structure for decision-making will be necessarily elaborate, but it will complicate even further if the whole of Korea, not just the South, joins the fray. In contrast to its tough noises in other areas of Seoul-Pyongyang relations, the South Korean government says the North is welcome to participate in the event's organisation.

It may help that Dr Chung Mong-joon is leading the South Korean organisation. Dr Chung is a son of Chung In-yeung, head of Hyundai (and a presidential candidate in 1992) who has in the past cultivated the North.

North and South played two football matches in 1990 in the spirit of "unification". They even won the women's team title for world table tennis in 1991 with a joint team, and got to the world youth soccer quarter-finals.

But the defection of Lee Chang-soo, a North Korean weightlifter who hopped off a train between events in Barcelona and Frankfurt in July 1991, put a blight on unification sports.

Mr Oh is optimistic, but says there is a problem in the North, with telecommunications and hotels. There would have to be direct access across the 38th parallel for fans of all countries, but the only way from Seoul to Pyongyang is a long dog-leg flight via Beijing.

Somehow the sound of "Here we go" across the demilitarised zone remains hard to imagine, even in the 21st century.



Juon Kum-dol, one of 24 South Koreans seeking compensation for being conscripted into the Japanese army during the second world war, is led away from Tokyo district court yesterday by security guards. Japan's opposition to the claim, which the court rejected, has strained relations between the two World Cup hosts. PHOTOGRAPH: SHIZU KAWAYASHI

Hong Kong resignation questioned

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

THE Hong Kong government was accused of a cover-up yesterday after it stonewalled a parliamentary investigation of allegations that a bureaucrat awarded an OBE for loyalty had betrayed secrets to China.

Questioned for four hours by a legislative council select committee, the civil service secretary, Lam Woon-kuong, retreated behind a barricade of evasion, prevarication and official secrecy.

He was the first witness called before the committee, set up to investigate the abrupt departure in July of the director of immigration, Laurence Leung.

"There must be something the government wants to hide. They don't want to disclose anything," a committee member, Yum Siu-ling, said. "He did not answer many essential questions. He hid everything behind confidentiality."

Mr Lam began with a statement denying unspecified "allegations in the press" but said nothing to end speculation of a potentially explosive scandal in the final months of British rule.

His replies only deepened the mystery surrounding Mr Leung. The governor, Chris Patten, says Mr Leung quit "for personal reasons" an explanation that has encouraged allegations and gossip.

The speculation has centred on a possible connection with China, but has also extended to London and British Columbia, where Mr Leung's daughter was murdered in January 1993. She

bled to death, shot with a crossbow. Mr Leung had access to sensitive information about Hong Kong officials who have applied in confidence for British passports and Chinese dissidents who have fled to Hong Kong.

He worked in government for 31 years, and left in such a hurry he did not stop to clear his desk.

He has denied "doing anything that would undermine the interests of the territory". Mr Lam said yesterday that he met Mr Leung on July 5, received a letter of "resignation" that afternoon, and approved his departure. The news was announced the next day in a terse statement.

Mr Lam did not say whether he had spoken to Mr Patten, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), or any other agency about Mr Leung before his resignation.

"It is not convenient for us to say which officials and which departments we spoke to in relation to Mr Leung's case," he said.

Unsatisfied, the committee ordered him to appear again for further questioning on December 5, together with his secretary and four senior bureaucrats, including the head of security, Mr Patten may be summoned later.

The committee also asked for Mr Lam's office diary. An earlier request for all documents relating to Mr Leung's resignation yielded only two letters and a press release.

"It seems extraordinary that in the whole of the government there is no record of Mr Leung's departure other than this," a committee member said.

A long Adios to Congress

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

THE Californian congressman reviewed his apparent defeat with a few well-chosen words: "It stinks to high heaven. It's voter fraud, gay money and illegal aliens," he roared.

Robert Dornan, aged 63, the rightwing Republican congressman from Anaheim, is trailing by a few hundred votes with all the ballots counted in the prosperous Orange county seat he has held for 19 years.

To add insult, his Hispanic rival, Loreta Sanchez, aged 36, has already claimed victory and left for Washington.

Mr Dornan, nicknamed B-1 Bob after his support for the locally manufactured bomber, is a former fighter pilot who always speaks in a shout. He is known for embracing government-subsidised defence contracts while castigating welfare-dependent Americans.

His imminent defeat is one of the biggest upsets of the US elections: last time he won 57 per cent of the vote. His support has melted away as the district — which once had more branches of the rightwing John Birch Society than the rest of California put together — has attracted more Hispanics and Vietnamese.

With about 1,300 ballot papers still to be counted, Ms Sanchez leads by 653 votes. Mr Dornan has threatened to sue her for electoral irregularities, claiming that she is a liar and has "tampered with the electoral process".

"Would she have won if her name was Larry Stanford?" he said. "What beat me was that — and more homosexual money than any race in history."

The federal election commission has found no evidence to support his claims. Mr Dornan, an occasional stand-in for the radio show host Rush Limbaugh, had hoped to exploit his high public profile and run for the White House this year. He had to withdraw when he received little support in the primaries.

Some Washington politicians say they will miss him. They do not include Barney Frank, the openly gay Democrat from Massachusetts, who described Mr Dornan as "seriously disturbed".

President Bill Clinton will not be sad either: Mr Dornan was once suspended from the House of Representatives for accusing him of being a traitor in avoiding military service.

Ms Sanchez herself called it all a typical Dornan outburst and, in the harshest farwell, added simply: "Adios."

News in brief

Call for anti-cult laws after jailing of Scientology leader

FRENCH campaigners against cults say they will press for laws against "mental manipulation" after the jailing of the former leader of the Church of Scientology, writes Alex Duval Smith in Paris. Jean-Jacques Maier was sentenced to 18 months in connection with the suicide in 1988 of a member of the Scientologists. Six judges sitting at the Lyon court said:

"In the interests of public order, the freedom of beliefs has its limits."

The trial was marked by demonstrations by Scientologists who claimed they were the target of an inquisition. It heard that Maier brainwashed Patrice Vio, an industrial designer who jumped from a 12th floor window after being asked to pay 30,000 francs (£3,750) for a "purification treatment".

Christopher ignores welcome

THE US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, strode unsmiling past the foreign and trade ministers of the Philippines forming the receiving line at an Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation dinner in Manila yesterday. It was a welcoming banquet

for delegates at the annual meeting of the 18-member Apec forum. A US official, asked about the incident, said he was sure no insult was intended. — Reuters.

Tigers meet in Bremen, page 12

Mother Teresa in hospital

Mother Teresa was taken to hospital in Calcutta with an irregular heartbeat yesterday, but doctors said her condition was improving and she was out of danger.

The 86-year-old nun received visitors, including sisters of her order, the Missionaries of Charity. — AP.

Life for killer

The Tasmanian supreme court in Australia yesterday sentenced the Fort Arthur killer Martin Bryant to life in jail for shooting 35 people, describing him as a pathetic misfit who nursed a grudge against the world. — Reuters.

Bikers shot

Two members of the Banditos, the biker gang locked in a Nordic feud with the Hell's Angels, were shot in an ambush in Horsens, west of the Jutland peninsula, west of Copenhagen. — AP.

Venezuelan crocodiles devour exotic pet market

Jane Knight in Caracas

HUNDREDS of discarded eggshells lie heaped outside the metal incubator building at Guacharaca farm. Inside, the newly born grunt in the 86°C heat. A nearby shell breaks open, and a baby reptile struggles out. The Venezuelan crocodile season has started. But these animals will not end up as handbags or shoes — they are destined for the growing international exotic pet market.

Guacharaca farm, two hours from Caracas, is one of a handful which rear crocodiles commercially. Although larger animals can be hunted in the wild, taxes and controls leave Venezuela struggling to compete with less-regulated markets. Skin exports are falling off, and this year hunting was banned.

trade to save Venezuela's crocodile farms — themselves an alternative to hunting. Of 27 farms raising the animals for their skins in 1992, only four remained last year.

"International demand for Venezuelan crocodile skins is very small — it is a question of fashion," said Mirna Quiro of Profauna. "But in the United States and the Far East, people go crazy for crocodiles as pets."

With strict controls stopping crocodile farmers from killing animals more than 3ft long, producers in Venezuela have been limited to watch- straps and belts.

Profauna started the pet

Agropecuaria Kinbo, which runs Guacharaca, quickly snapped up the more lucrative option. "The demand for skins was too little so we switched to pets, which are more profitable," said the owner, Juan Carlos Alvarez.

As soon as the crocodiles hatch, little longer than a ballpoint pen, they can be exported for about \$10 each. In the US, which takes 80 per cent of them, they sell for many times that. Spain and Germany make up Europe's exotic pet market.

Together, the crocodiles can eat two 77lb donkeys every fortnight. "These animals will never be domesticated," the farm manager, Ivan Pineda, said.

After three years the crocodiles are about 20ins long, at which point the company recommends they go to zoos.

6 WORLD NEWS



A man wrapped in a Belarusian flag demonstrates in support of parliament, locked in a standoff with the president, outside its building in Minsk. PHOTOGRAPH: SERGEI GERTS

Julian Borger reports on a new bullish mood in Belgrade and Zagreb
New nerve to Balkan protests

THE Serbian government was trying to weather an onslaught of sustained street protests last night, led by opposition parties which have accused the ruling socialists of blatant election-rigging.

In the fifth day of demonstrations in Serbian cities, about 1,000 students marched through the centre of Belgrade in support of the main opposition coalition, Zajedno (Together).

The previous day 20,000 Zajedno supporters staged the biggest protest seen in the capital for five years. Zajedno has claimed victory in 15 of the 18 largest towns in Serbia in the local elections last weekend.

The Serbian Socialist Party (SPS) conceded defeat in Belgrade and the northern town of Novi Sad, but elsewhere pending the declaration of final results, provoking fury among opposition leaders, who threatened civil strife.

In a statement issued yesterday, student leaders said they were protesting at "the

violation of basic democratic principles and unscrupulous trampling of elementary human rights".

In the central industrial town of Nis, which Zajedno claims to have won, the electoral commission tipped the balance on the city council to the SPS by awarding them extra seats because of unspecified voting "irregularities".

The British ambassador, Ivor Roberts, stepped into the row, addressing a letter to Zajedno leaders in which he expressed concern at "the uncertainty and allegations over the results of the Serbian municipal elections".

"I have personally conveyed our concerns to the authorities here at the highest levels," he wrote.

"In particular I urged that any irregularities should be dealt with promptly and in accordance with the law."

Zajedno leaders said they expected final rulings from election commissions within the next two days. If the authorities hand more victories to the ruling party, further protests are almost certain.

So far, cordons of riot police have looked on as the demonstrators marched past. During street protests in 1991, they attacked the protesters with batons and water-can-

media, weak opposition parties and government reluctance to accept opposition electoral gains, even at local level.

In Croatia, President Franjo Tudjman has rejected a string of opposition candidates for the job of Zagreb mayor, overruling support from a clear majority in the city council.

An estimated 100,000 dem-

onstrators took to the streets of Zagreb on Thursday night — the largest anti-government demonstration since independence in 1991 — to protest at an attempt to close down Radio 101, a popular station broadcasting a mix of music, news and irreverent talk-shows.

Significantly, many soldiers and war veterans telephoned the embattled station to offer moral support.

"A quarter of the total Za-

'This number of people hasn't been seen in Zagreb for five years. But we are not so naive to think this is a final victory'

Belarus leader inflames crisis

David Hearst in Moscow
 Jonathan Steele and
 Reuters in Minsk

THE president of Belarus threatened last night to renege on a Russian-mediated deal to end his country's political crisis if parliament — which has accused him of seeking dictatorial powers through a referendum that culminates tomorrow — fails to ratify it.

"If you do not pass this resolution into law, I will be forced to return to the situation as it was the day before yesterday," Alexander Lukashenko warned deputies, who have accused their leadership of a sell-out in agreeing to compromise with him.

As the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin appeared on television to proclaim victory for the deal mediated by his prime minister, deputies in Belarus were tearing up the agreement and refusing to ratify it.

President Lukashenko last night gave the rebellious parliament two hours to agree to the terms.

He said: "I must state that the referendum will go ahead on November 24 and, as head of state, I will do everything I can to ensure that the will of the people will be binding within the framework of the agreement."

The deal established a commission — staffed half by the president's supporters and half by his opponents — to work out a new constitution.

President Lukashenko agreed to make the referendum consultative, rather than binding, as he had wanted. The parliamentary leader, Semyon Sharetsky, undertook to withdraw a petition by deputies seeking to impeach him.

But many deputies were having none of it. After two weeks of voting — and heavy vote-rigging — the referendum is certain to give President Lukashenko a resounding win.

This will allow him to say that he has popular backing to demand a new constitution which weakens parliament and continues the mandate of the presidency until 2001. He will also have a natural majority on the commission.

Communists, social democrats and liberals urged parliament to continue with its impeachment bid, as Mr Sharetsky sat exhausted.

A social democratic deputy, Pavel Znavets, said: "We must declare impeachment — God has given us one last chance."

Mikhail Sazon, a middle-aged factory worker, who stood wrapped in a Belarusian flag with a small group of demonstrators in Independence Square early yesterday, said: "The president is a liar. He should have been pushed into resignation."

Mr Lukashenko has refused to withdraw 17 decrees which the constitutional court considered unconstitutional. He sacked the chairman of the electoral commission, Viktor Gonchar, who said there were so many discrepancies with the referendum that he would refuse to confirm its validity.

Mr Lukashenko has been helped by Russia, which posed in this crisis as the motherland intervening in a family dispute. Integration is popular — particularly in ailing rural areas.

As if to emphasise the link with Russia, Mr Lukashenko's aides chose yesterday to announce that Moscow had withdrawn its last mobile nuclear missiles from Belarusian soil.

Britain agrees to Israeli dialogue

Ian Black
 Diplomatic Editor

BRTAIN and Israel are to begin a regular "strategic dialogue" to boost military co-operation and exchange assessments on Middle Eastern "rogues" such as Iraq and Iran.

Yitzhak Mordechai, Israel's defence minister, has finalised details with the defence secretary, Michael Portillo, and the first session is to be held in Tel Aviv in January.

It will include talks between senior officials on operational doctrine, the future battlefield and terrorism.

The two countries already co-operate in these areas, but the dialogue is intended to upgrade the exchanges and encourage growing links between

their respective defence industries and intelligence communities.

British officials said discussions were held on a "wide range of bilateral and geopolitical topics" and acknowledged that contacts with Israel had improved.

Mr Mordechai meanwhile announced that agreement on the West Bank town of Hebron, due to be evacuated by Israel under the Oslo accord with the PLO, was now only "days away".

He insisted no new settlements were being planned in the West Bank, although existing ones could be expanded.

Visiting London for the first time, Mr Mordechai has been forced to cope with the chilled relations, even in friendly countries, which have emerged since the election victory of the Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu.

But Israeli sources angrily denied reports that Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, had given Mr Mordechai a blunt warning over settlement policy. They accused Foreign Office officials of deliberately hostile media briefing.

Mr Rifkind's private secretary later telephoned the Israeli ambassador, Moshe Raviv, to apologise and to explain that the foreign secretary was "very cross" at the reports.



Due to the temporary closure of the Channel Tunnel, Eurostar regrets that all services (including Eurostar Link trains) continue to be suspended until further notice.

Customers holding tickets will be fully refunded or offered alternative booking dates, regardless of ticket type. New or amended bookings cannot currently be made for travel to be taken before 1 December 1996.

Eurostar is ready to resume services and bookings as soon as the authorities approve the re-opening of the Channel Tunnel to Eurostar trains.

For further information, please call 0345 30 30 30 (all calls are local rate).

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Lord Bancroft

A mandarin who refused to grovel

LORD BANCROFT, the former head of the Civil Service who has died aged 73, was the epitome of the Establishment mandarin: cautious, precise to the point of fastidiousness, and fighting to the end to try to preserve Whitehall's traditional values. His death truly marks the passing of an era, made more poignant by the present controversy over the abuse of civil servants for party political purposes.

He warned 10 years ago about what he called the subtle and insidious dangers of a service politician. "The dangers," he said, "are of the younger people, seeing that advice which ministers want to hear falls with a joyous note on their ears ... they [will] trim, make their views what ministers want to hear rather than what they need to know."

It all started with Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister and Bancroft, her chief mandarin, were like chalk and cheese, in personal chemistry as much as outlook. He paid due deference to his political master, and recognised that the mandarinate needed some shaking-up — "we were stunningly good at re-inventing the wheel," he conceded. But he also made clear that, in his view, Thatcher was undermining the central job of the politically-neutral Civil Service to give objective advice to ministers without fear or favour. "Conviction civil servants, certainly," he said, "conviction civil servants, no." He subsequently mused about what he called the high "grovel count" among both officials and ministers under the Thatcher Government.

An episode early in her Downing Street reign provides an illuminating insight into Bancroft's world at the pinnacle of his official career. Worried about the friction between Thatcher and the mandarin class, Willie Whitelaw arranged an evening of conversation between the PM and the permanent secretaries. "Thank God Frank's gone to get the SAS to get us out of here," according to Professor Peter Hennessy, author of a masterful study of Whitehall, the evening meeting ended abruptly at 10pm when Thatcher said: "Gentlemen! Your cars are waiting."

It was not long before Bancroft was deprived of his official car and his post. In 1981 Thatcher abolished his Civil Service Department and with it, the self-standing post of Head of the Home Service. Bancroft was educated at Coatham School, Cleveland, and won a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford. He served in the Rifle Brigade in the second world war and painted the words "St James' Infirmary Blues" — he was a fan of Louis Armstrong — on his Bren gun carrier.

He joined the Treasury in 1947, and soon embarked on the traditional route to the top as private secretary to three successive Chancellors, including Jim Callaghan, who later described Bancroft as "my strong right arm for three years."

In 1975 he was appointed permanent secretary at the Department of the Environment and in 1978, a year before Thatcher's first election victory, head of the Civil Service. In one of his rare public comments about his private interests, he revealed to his department's staff newsletter, that one of his favourite writers was the author of the Dance to the Music of Time books. "I actually believe as I get older," Bancroft said, "that life is very much like the Anthony Powell novels in that you keep meeting the same people over and over again but under different circumstances." He insisted, however, that the Civil Service was not "Mafia-like," rather it was "collegiate".

Hennessy quotes from a lecture Bancroft gave in praise of a former colleague: "I was trained in the Treasury for good or ill," said Bancroft, "by a man who still ferociously pursues the public good. He showed me ... why the Service belongs neither to politicians nor to officials but to the Crown and to the nation."

Bancroft, once described by a Civil Service union leader as "smooth as monumental alabaster," described himself as "inclined by temperament and training to understatement." Yet he could be entertainingly and purposefully sharp; he once heard ministers praising civil servants; they did so, he observed, "through gritted teeth".

In a letter to the Times signed "Frank," Thatcher imposed a trade union ban at the GCHQ intelligence-gathering centre in January 1984, he said he did not know enough about the harm done by selective strikes there to comment on the merits of the Government's action. But he said that like many others he disliked limiting civil liberties and added: "What is beyond dispute is that the handling has been breathtakingly inept; a further example of the way a branch of management science."

He had strong convictions of his own. A year ago in the Guardian, he delivered a stinging attack on the Government, accusing ministers of opening the way to corruption by undermining the central pillar of the century-old tradition of fair and open competition untrammelled by political bias.

Lord Bancroft is survived by his wife, Jean, two sons and a daughter. Richard Norton-Taylor



Bancroft: accused ministers



Commander R A G Butler

Into battle ... "Rags" Butler and the Jervis Bay, the merchantman which attacked the German battleship Admiral Scheer head-on. The young British sailor directed the fire of his three guns aft before his position took a direct hit



Midshipman who took on an Admiral

COMMANDER R A G "Rags" Butler, who has died aged 75, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross at the age of 19 for his part in the one-sided action between the merchant cruiser Jervis Bay and the German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer in 1940.

The Jervis Bay was one of 46 large mercantile ships converted to "armed merchant cruisers" (AMC) with a Royal Navy crew and a handful of 6-inch guns, often of antiquated vintage, because of the desperate shortage of gun escorts in the first months of the war.

AMCs lacked anti-submarine equipment and were also sitting ducks for surface raiders like the Scheer. They stood a chance of success against a conveniently surfaced U-boat but were otherwise more of a liability than an asset.

But the Jervis Bay, under Captain E S F Fegen, RN, was all that could be spared to escort the 37 ships of convoy HX 84 from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Britain. On November 5, 1940 the bulky 14,164-ton merchantman was sighted by the Scheer which had set out on what was to be the most destructive German surface mission of the war. The 13,690-ton cruiser, under the command of Captain Theodor Krancke, could outrun or outgun almost all of the Royal Navy's largest warships.

ordered the convoy to scatter — standard procedure against a surface threat — and made a run at the enemy as if commanding a battleship. Since she had no armour and her armament of seven 6-inch guns barely mustered a third of the range of the much faster Scheer's modern 11-inch guns, this gesture could only serve as a distraction; the Jervis Bay would have achieved as much unarmed.

Krancke needed three range-finding salvos before demolishing the Jervis Bay. The first German hit struck the bridge, shattering Fegen's right arm. Midshipman Butler was on the afterbridge, directing the fire of the three guns aft with a primitive range-finder. His position took a direct hit, killing others but leaving him unscathed.

Fegen staggered aft to deliver the order to abandon ship personally. He told Butler to make sure every man was aware of it before returning to his post. His ship lay dead in the water within minutes of the attack but stayed afloat for nearly three hours, sinking only after dark.

By then the convoy had dispersed and the Scheer could sink only five ships totalling 33,000 tons, damaging three others which were saved. Nearly 200 men of the Jervis Bay, including Fegen, were lost; Butler and 64 others were rescued by a returning merchantman from the convoy the next day.

Butler, who joined the Royal Navy Reserve as a midshipman in 1939, stayed with escort ships, serving in destroyers on transatlantic, Arctic and Mediterranean convoys. He was gunnery lieutenant on HMS Intrepid when she was caught and bombed by the Luftwaffe in the Dodecanese Islands in September 1943.

Butler was taken prisoner after his ship capsized but managed to escape his captors and steal a launch. Picked up a second time, he again managed to sneak away and commandeer a boat. The Germans caught him once more; but his third attempt to get away in a stolen boat succeeded. He managed to reach Beirut and was flown to Cairo. The transport aircraft crashed on landing yet Butler managed to clamber out of the wreckage unhurt.

Offered a bar to his DSC for his daring, Butler chose promotion instead and became gunnery officer on a fast minesweeper in time for the invasion of Normandy in 1944. He finished the war in the British Pacific fleet and was offered a regular commission.

He retired from the RN in 1967 to join the oil industry. He served on rigs in the Far East for Burmah oil.

Commander Butler had two daughters by his first marriage and one by his second. Dan Van Der Vat

Michael Burchill

MICHAEL Burchill, who has died aged 65 was an opera singer, actor, producer, actor, production manager, and scenery builder, responsible for the sets for many West End theatres and television shows.

A Londoner, he started as an opera singer touring with the Carl Rosa company, and spent three years as a baritone with the Royal Corps of Signals band. He often recorded with it in later years. During the 1950s, he sang in the then hugely popular summer shows, in places like Weston-Super-Mare and Morecambe.

He also became an adept straight man, and, from the late 1950s, a cabaret singer at a wave of new clubs opened around Manchester. This too did he make several appearances in early Coronation Street episodes. After a spell as a production manager he decided to form his own scenery-building company. He leaves a wife, Rhona, two daughters and two sons.

Michael Dynan
Michael Burchill, actor, born April 13, 1931, died November 3, 1996

Letters: Alger Hiss and Abdus Salam

The point about Woodstock N230099

Natalia Schiffrin writes: I first met Alger Hiss (obituary November 18) when I was in my final year of university. We were introduced by a mutual friend. Alger was working on his memories but, eyesight failing, was looking for someone to help him type up his manuscript. As a history student, I jumped at the chance.

Together we worked through his life, chapter by chapter, starting with a summer he had spent in Giverny as a young man, through his service in the New Deal, his memories of Eleanor Roosevelt and Oliver Wendell Holmes, the bombing of Pearl Harbor (Alger worked in the far eastern division of the State Department at the time), his role in the founding of the United Nations.

resolved. But for his friends, there is just sorrow at the loss of his friendship. Patrick Renshaw, Reader in American History, University of Sheffield, writes: John Lowenthal's note (November 21) to your obituary of Alger Hiss misses the point about the Woodstock typewriter.

We talked about his life, and always when together I would read aloud to Alger the New York Times, or a chapter from a book. Our reading sessions were interrupted frequently by both of us, in order to discuss world affairs. Always a hot topic was whether one should vote for whichever neo-conservative Democrat was running for election, in the hope of voting out the Republican (me: no, Alger: yes).

I never ceased to be astonished at how modern Alger was, interested in young people and the world around him, with a razor sharp mind and memory — into his nineties. His death brings with it the inevitable rehashing of Pumpkin Papers and Woodstock typewriters and connections to the typed copies, while four of the notes produced in court were in Alger's own hand. He never denied owning the typewriter Woodstock N230099. Indeed, he produced it in court himself. But nor did he substantiate his claim that Chambers carried out "forgery by typewriter".

John Ziman Emeritus Professor of Physics, Bristol University writes: To Anthony Tucker's splendid obituary of Abdus Salam (November 22) you could add the following comment: Abdus Salam had mana. If he took you by the elbow, and said "John I want you to go to Valparaiso on Wednesday," you went even if you had planned to be in Singapore. That personal willpower, applied to political and scientific notables alike, created and sustained the International Centre for Theoretical Physics. He was not always wise; but all who met him knew that he was truly great and good.

Moreover, Hiss and his wife made handwritten corrections to the typed copies, while four of the notes produced in court were in Alger's own hand. He never denied owning the typewriter Woodstock N230099. Indeed, he produced it in court himself. But nor did he substantiate his claim that Chambers carried out "forgery by typewriter".

Face to Faith

Better to travel together than go it alone

George Carey

ONE OF MY heroes is C F Andrews. He went as an Anglican missionary to India in 1904 and joined the brotherhood at St Stephen College, Delhi. There he discovered the richness of Indian Christianity, but also the depths of Hindu saintliness in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore and the great Muslim, Maulvi Zakir Ullah. A man of action, Andrews could not do his thinking in his study and spent his life meeting people, challenging them and being challenged.

Perhaps the greatest influence on him was Mahatma Gandhi whose direct and radical love for the very poor linked Andrews's Anglo-Catholic commitment to near-national Christianity. They united in common action and from that a real affection and

friendship grew. His influence on Gandhi was as profound as Gandhi's influence on him. The theology of both was marked by the encounter that comes from trusting and lasting friendship. But whereas Gandhi was a pluralist for whom religious conversion was anathema because religious allegiance was the same as identity, memory and nationhood, Andrews believed that religious conversion to another faith could be a discovery of one's true spiritual destiny and should not be forbidden. He wrote to Gandhi: "Christ is for me the unique way whereby I have come to God and have found God, and I cannot help telling others about it whenever I can do so without any compulsion or undue influence. I honour Paul the apostle when he says: 'Necessity is laid upon me; woe to me if I preach not the gospel.'"

tions that will surround the start of the new millennium: it is vital that a spiritual element is at the centre of all the events. We need to promote the sympathetic affirmation of other faiths. Criticism of them is easy because we are dealing with the alienation everyone feels when confronted with strangeness and difference. We need more books of the kind John Macquarrie has just written, *The Mediators*, in which he reviews great religious leaders including Moses, Zoroaster, Lao-Tzu, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, Krishna, Jesus and Mohammed and calls them nine stars in the human sky. Although a convinced Christian theologian, Macquarrie leaves us in no doubt that he values these nine great men.

It costs Christians very little to say that Mohammed was a great religious leader whose influence on millions has been for the good. We can acknowledge too the ways in which his teaching, and that of our Lord and of the Hebrew scriptures have so much in common. We can point with admiration to the uncompromising devotion to God found in Islam. Who has not seen Muslims praying publicly without admiring their profound commitment to their faith? The ethical monotheism of Islam may seem anathema to some people, but there is so much in the teaching of the Qur'an which is gentle and compassionate showing Mohammed's generosity towards his enemies, his commitment to forgiving and his care for the weak and unfortunate. We are on a journey together and we live in a world where the world of faiths jostle side by side. We are able to choose to walk together in harmony or to jockey for position and so add to the chaos and troubles of our world by treating one another as enemies rather than neighbours who should be friends. In my view inter-faith dialogue is not an option but a necessity — neither is it an impossibility — but the answer to the question "How far can we travel together?" is not one we can answer when the journey has only just begun. It is something we shall only discover as we set out boldly on the way.

Weekend Birthdays



WHEN Billy Connolly (54 tomorrow) performed in London back in 1976, before his rise to fame, the London Evening News — a paper that is no longer with us or, as Ronnie Scott would say, no longer with anyone — raved about his brilliant comedy. "Saddy, Connolly is destined to become a millionaire, world-wide superstar. He'll probably end up with a season in Las Vegas, a TV series and a lost sense of humour." The News critic was right about the television series — in which our hero is currently touring Australia. But, although he now lives in California, Connolly was always a bit too vulgar for Vegas. And the sense of humour has remained intact, despite the snipings from a Scottish tabloid press that

initially praised him for his honesty and then castigated him when he told them what he honestly thought of them and nationalism. A national treasure. Today's birthdays: Jerry Bock, composer, 68; Anne Burns, former gliding champion, 81; John Cole, political commentator, 69; John Coulter, former chairman, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 72; Michael Gough, actor, 79; Shane Gould, Olympic swimmer, 41; Sir John Hermon, former chief constable, RUC, 68; Merv Hughes, cricketer, 38; Sir David Lees, chairman, GKN, 60; Christopher Logue, poet, 70; Alan Mullery, former footballer, 55; Julian Oxley, director-general, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, 67; Krzysztof Penderecki, composer, 63; Diana Quick, actress, 50; Sir Peter Saunders, theatrical impresario, 85; Sir Peter Strawson, metaphysical philosopher, 77; Anthony Sullivan, rugby league footballer, 29; Nigel Tranter, novelist and historian, 87. Tomorrow's other birthdays: Peter Birse, chairman, Birse Group, 54; David Blakely, chief constable, West Mercia, 53; Jamile, Marquess of

Death Notices

WEEK, Alexandra Louise McDowell, On Friday 22nd November at home. Mother of Andrew, (deceased) and Judith, (wife of Michael), (deceased) and daughter, Family funeral at Scarborough Crematorium on Tuesday 26th November at 10.30am. Interment at Crofton. No flowers please but donations welcome to St Catherine's, 197 Southby Road, Scarborough.

In Memoriam

PHILLIPOTT, John, died November 24th 1996. Remembrance in love and laughter. BT to place an announcement telephone 0171 733 4267. Fax 0171 733 4268.

The sham of Tory unity

But no early election — yet

IT HAS taken six weeks for the Conservative Party's latest bout of unity over Europe to fall apart. By recent standards, six weeks is a very long time in Tory politics and the party's strategists should be grateful for small mercies. But the fact remains that the latest conciliatory effort, which began after John Major's skillful performance at the Bournemouth party conference, has now been blown apart like all its predecessors.

The immediate reason is the Labour Party's announcement last weekend that it will hold a referendum on the single currency if a Labour government decides to join the Euro group in 1999 or beyond. Labour's decision was a happy combination of principle and tactical advantage. It rightly committed the party to a necessary public campaign to reaffirm Britain's European commitment if it takes the major step into the single currency. But the immediate reaction of many Conservative backbenchers was that with Labour now adopting the same policy as the Government, it was tactically necessary for the Tories to push further into the Eurosceptic long grass in order to emphasise their scepticism the more. That brought the simmering tensions in the Conservative Party back to the boil, and it was only a matter of time before an issue arose which would propel the sceptics over the top.

In the event, the explosion has come over an issue which combines two potent concerns not only of many Eurosceptics but, crucially, of other MPs as well. This crux came in midweek when sceptics broke ranks on the Commons backbench European scrutiny committee to join Labour in demanding a full debate on three EU background documents on transitional moves towards the creation of the single currency. This provided an opportunity for the sceptics to push their arch-enemy Kenneth Clarke into the public arena where they could attack him for his support of the three documents. When the Government refused to allow the debate, however, it also became an issue of backbenchers' rights to hold the executive to account. Within hours, the talk was of rising tides of anger, new outbreaks of civil war, lost votes of confidence and even an early general election.

Before everyone gets completely carried away by these exciting possibilities, let us just take stock calmly. There is not going to be an early election. The Government's majority may be down to a single vote, but there is little sign that the Conservatives have lost, or are about to lose, their control of the House of Commons. The principal reason for this is that Labour appears not to want to bring the Government down now, even if it could. It showed this by the way that its backbenchers stayed away in sufficient numbers to ensure the passage of the Government's post-Dunblane gun-control legislation this week. But there is also little sign that the Tory Eurosceptics are ultimately willing to bring the Government down either. They are great talkers and bullies, these Tory Eurosceptics. But when it comes to the crunch, most of them will always support the Government, especially in anything that is seen as a confidence vote. The last thing they want is a general election. But then the last thing that either party wants is a general election called in the middle of winter on the old electoral register. If this were late January, it might be another matter. But in late November? No one wants a Christmas election.

Nevertheless it is disgraceful that the Conservatives cannot find a way of allowing a debate on the single currency on the floor of the House of Commons. The disgrace owes something to the Leader of the House's refusal to respond to the vote of the backbench committee. But it is more a question of the ruthless way in which the parliamentary timetable is now being commandeered for purely electioneering purposes. This week, the Government called a full day's debate on the Opposition's policy pledge on the windfall tax to coincide with the launch of its own attack on Labour spending policies. Now the Government is refusing to debate the single currency. The parliamentary agenda, in other words, has been hijacked by Conservative Central Office.

None of the three documents which the backbenchers debated this week is in any sense a surprise. One deals with the legal position of the euro. The second establishes an updated pre-EMU version of the exchange rate mechanism. The third sets out the details by which countries joining the single currency can be compelled to maintain the monetary disciplines which they accepted in order to enter. These are all necessary and integral parts of the implementation of the Maastricht treaty and embody the Government's correct policy of trying to influence the emerging institutions of monetary union while retaining, under the UK opt-out, the option of not joining them. That is the policy on which, six weeks ago, the Conservative Party pretended to be united. This week has confirmed that such unity was an autumn sham.

Service for free

The new bill risks deterring volunteers

LIKE every Saturday, volunteers will be turning out in their thousands today to help young people enjoy themselves. Yet a nation which has always prided itself on its millions of volunteers is now seeing some of its traditional sources drying up. Men have become more wary of volunteering for scout or cub activities for fear of being accused of paedophile tendencies; women who have returned to work find themselves with less time for guides or brownies. And now the Government could deter even more with its new Police Bill. Under the Bill, employers are required to screen staff members who work with young people through clearance certificates issued by the new Criminal Records Agency. Although there is no obligation for voluntary organisations to follow suit, the voluntary organisations may have to because of pressure from insurance companies. The cost of a search on each individual is £10, payable by the organisation or the individual. If left to individuals, there will be even fewer volunteers, particularly given the new emphasis on recruiting non-traditional volunteers — unemployed, disabled, elderly — many of whom have little cash. But the cost to voluntary organisations will be huge. A solution is to hand: an amendment to the Bill, tabled this week, which would exempt volunteers from such charges. If ministers are serious about promoting volunteers, they must back this move.

Letters to the Editor

Chunnel comes under fire

MY fellow bootleggers and I were stuck in the train behind the one on fire on Monday evening. Keith Harper (Fall the truth about the tunnel fire, November 21) is absolutely correct about lack of communication being a major problem.

Having had a pleasant trip over and a pleasant day shopping in Calais, it all started to go wrong at the entrance to the checking-in area of the tunnel for the return journey. We sat there for two hours while the French tunnel staff had a wildcat strike. Many of them are facing redundancy and Eurotunnel have allegedly reneged on agreements. At no time did Le Shuttle (as we renamed it) attempt to explain the delay or apologise. Finally the service resumed. Odd that one of the first trains through after the shutdown should have been on fire.

We boarded the train and started the journey through the tunnel. After five minutes the train stopped, the lights dimmed and nothing happened. Had we known that there was a blazing train a couple of miles further into the tunnel there might have

been widespread panic, so it was unsurprising that no one was communicating with us about this latest hold-up. But then why were we left in the tunnel in these circumstances for almost an hour?

It could have been worse I suppose: at least the duty free arrived home safely, albeit 12 hours late.
Jon Ashe,
84 Ocklyng Road,
Eastbourne,
East Sussex BN21 1QA.

THOSE of us who were to travel on the 12.30 train from Brussels to Waterloo were informed of the "incident" in the tunnel only four minutes before we were to board the train. We were given three options: a full refund, wait until Wednesday to travel or take pot luck on the train.

A rational decision in four minutes was difficult so we all opted for the train: after all, the word "incident" did not indicate a major problem. We were, however, warned that we might not get home that day. It is abundantly clear now that there existed no contingency plan in the event of severe damage to the tunnel.

It is even more clear that little had been done by management in the intervening 12 hours since the incident to cope with the stranded passengers. The Eurostar staff were polite but they had no idea what was happening next.

The sensible approach to the problem of stranded passengers was to disperse as many of them as possible by using airports. Instead we were all shunted slowly to Calais and shivered in the snow for 10 to 15 minutes because Eurostar had arranged for six coaches instead of the eight needed to move us all. When we finally boarded the ferry, my wife and I suffered verbal abuse from most of our fellow passengers who thought we were getting preferential treatment.

Eurostar condemned all of us to a day of misery when a few phone calls could have ensured that most of our fellow passengers had been home ahead of schedule instead of six and a quarter hours late, as in our case.
Mike Harvey,
5 Constable Ave,
Chesham,
Essex CO16 8XA.

Three pathetically-defeatist, woolly-liberal ideas on crime

THE Audit Commission has demonstrated that there is nothing "systematic" about the criminal justice system's response to juvenile crime (1 billion youth justice system is falling all concerned, November 23). There are as many systems as there are local authorities. Each places a different level of priority on intervention, and they often rely heavily on the voluntary sector.

There is one immediate response government could make. Millions of pounds are to be spent on the proposed secure training centres. First suggested in 1983, these are just the sort of ineffectual, expensive response to juvenile crime that the Audit Commission vilifies. The money should be redirected to fund a systematic approach to juvenile crime, developing the good practice mentioned in the report.
Clare Sparks,
Prison Reform Trust,
15 Northburgh Street,
London EC1V 0AH.

THE National Audit Office, according to Home Office minister David Maclean, is full of "pathetically defeatist" woolly liberals. How else can we explain that, on the same day that the Government introduced electronic tagging for schoolchildren, the NAO says that it is cheaper and more effective to put young offenders on probation and reparation schemes than to put them through court?

The cost of tagging is 18 times more than supervision. When does it work? According to Charles Rose of Goonriffs, the firm in one of the trials,

when there is clear supervision by the Probation Service, 100 per cent of the boys were re-arrested within 12 months. Let's say money, however, is not the only factor. What has already worked? Let's employ mediation and reparation under the supervision of committed and well-trained people — not some who had got into trouble with the law one to do the job.
Maurice Prior,
Director, The Bournemouth Prison,
13 Brixton Road,
London SW9 6DF.

There is a vast difference between knowing right from wrong and choosing to do the right thing when faced with a challenge. Yet it is within a lack both of suitable opportunities for experiential learning and of a suitable mentor to help show the relevance of the lessons learned to their own lives which identify the greatest risk to schoolchildren. A combination of these two elements is what early intervention must seek to provide.
Nigel Haynes,
Director, Fairbridge,
1 Westminster Bridge Road,
London SE1 7FL.

Please include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters.

Why Oxbridge comes out tops

YOUR article (Oxbridge class pulls top jobs, November 20) forgot to mention that the Government provides Oxbridge with almost twice as much funding per student as other universities. Due to an artificial separation of lectures and tutorials between university and colleges at Oxbridge, both university and colleges receive grants.

By contrast, in Manchester we offer high-quality lectures and tutorials to our students, but all within the structure of a department. The playing field will never be level unless Oxbridge colleges are taxed on the huge

wealth many of them have built up over the centuries.
K Osama Rahman,
School of Educational Studies,
University of Manchester,
Oxford Road,
Manchester M13 9PL.

UNIVERSITIES known for their density and which require three A-levels rather than two Es, are naturally targeted by recruiters, who know that all degrees are not alike. They know by experience, not prejudice.
Jane Williams,
Farlands Drive,
Chelmsford, Essex.

Family values

I WAS disturbed by your leader writer's support (November 22) for the principle that people who practise deceit in their relationships should be regarded in the same light as honest people. Somebody who marries a woman under false pretences and then chooses, every day for 17 years, to maintain a lie as a normal way of living is not a partner.

Partnership can only be based on mutual honesty and truth between the parties concerned; if one party is not aware of the basis of the relationship, or of something absolutely germane to it, then there is no partnership: there is only exploitation. If children are to be told that the liar has the right to contact with them because of a supreme court decision, what sort of message will they get about how we think human relationships should be conducted?
Jean Molloy,
Theodore Road,
London SE13.

The big idea

MAUREEN Plantagenet makes untrue accusations when she says that stealing programme ideas is endemic in the BBC (The subject TV daren't mention, Media, November 18). She mentions QED and a proposal of her own.

With QED, an independently-produced programme was made following a commission separate from, different from, and 18 months later than a proposal submitted by another independent producer, Bernard Clark. Ms Plantagenet's claims about her own proposal — about donor insemination — have been investigated and are unfounded. She also accuses the BBC of hiding cases of plagiarism, by reference to Mr Clark and Talking Liberties. No interview was held with Mr Clark because the programme could find nothing to support his complaint that one of his ideas had been stolen.

Mistakes, though, can occur — as with the episode of Between the Lines to which Ms Plantagenet refers — but that was a rare error.
Michael Jackson,
Controller, BBC1,
BBC Television Centre,
Wood Lane, London W12 7RJ.



A punch-up over boxing

THE view of Dr Adrian Whitson that "not enough is known about the potential risks of boxing to women" (Outcry over women in the ring, November 19) shows him to be nimble-footed indeed.

Dr Whitson, as medical adviser to the Board of Boxing Control, has withstood a constant stream of medical evidence of the instant and persistent brain damage caused by boxing for over 20 years. He did so when we reported two cases of acute intracranial haemorrhage (one bleeding into the other onto their brain soon after bouts) in young amateur boxers, aged 17 and 22, who appeared in a Birmingham hospital in 1979 and has persistently ignored the evidence since. As even mini-

mal brain shrinkage can now be seen using magnetic resonance images, perhaps he would like to support (and promote the funding for) such a study, both before, and well after, boxers commence major bouts for more evidence!

The slight of great athletes like Mohammed Ali at this summer's Olympics is a tragedy, particularly when they carry the label "Parkinson's disease" as a polite substitute for the real pathology of brain atrophy following multiple blows to the head over a boxing career.
(Dr) J K Cruickshank,
Medical School and Royal Infirmary,
University of Manchester,
Oxford Road,
Manchester M13 9PL.

Last words

DAVID Cronenberg's last film, The Naked Lunch, based on a book of the same name by William S Burroughs, featured explicit scenes of a lobster having sex with a typewriter. Did that film inspire any copycat incidents? If so, then John Bull etc (Sadomasochist film Crash banned, November 21) could be barking up the right tree after all.
Andrew Hazlett,
11 Lynton Road,
London N6 6SR.

AS one of a growing number of unemployed Manx graduates, I was very interested to read the comments of the Rt Hon Miles Walker MHC that "... anyone who wants a job can have one" in your article on the forthcoming Manx elections (November 19). Since returning to the island some 18 months ago, and having applied for a wide variety of positions, I have only succeeded in obtaining three temporary jobs, two of which were "McJobs". Contentment? I think not.
Name and address supplied.

WITH reference to Isabel Hilton's article (A question for you and your maker alone, November 14), a new question on religious affiliation will be included in the Census Test on June 15 next year, but the wording has still to be decided. However, the question will allow for those who do not have a religious affiliation as well as those who do. If the question is included in the 2001 Census, the Census Offices will consider in 1998 whether it should be compulsory or voluntary.
J M Dixie,
Office for National Statistics,
Seagrove Road,
Titchfield, Fareham,
Hants PO15 5RR.

THE British Casino Association would like to make it clear that your allegation of an £8 million donation to the Conservative Party (Secret Blair fund backed by watchdog, November 19) is groundless. None of the 118 casinos we represent make political contributions as a matter of policy.
Brian Lemon,
General Secretary,
British Casino Association,
29 Castle Street,
Reading, Berks RG1 7SL.

Revalue the currency of debate

THERE must be a proper debate in the Commons on the EU and the single currency (Major's Euro gamble, November 22), but there should also be a wider debate in the country at large. The Government and the Labour front bench both maintain that the time for a decision on EMU has not yet arrived and cannot be made until all the facts are known. Yet the existence of the three EU documents that came before the standing committee demonstrates that a lot of the ground-work has been laid.

If the British people are to make their decision in a referendum, they must have the facts and time to reflect upon them before casting their vote. The Swedish government has put together a document setting out the arguments for and against Swedish entry. Why cannot we be given a similar paper? There is a further reason for having an informed debate in

the Commons before the Euro-summit. As the real decisions-making power still rests (alas) with the Council of Ministers, which meets in secret, it is vital that British ministers tell us how they intend to argue and vote when they get there.
John Thomsson,
Croglin Cottage,
Friday Lane,
Charlton St Peter,
Wiltshire SN9 6EY.

YOU report me "helping the Government get off the hook" (20 November) over its scandalous efforts to stifle a Commons debate on the single currency. Observers would be surprised that a left-wing MP would do this and I didn't. I was merely making a procedural point in the committee, which was dealing with several large bundles of documents.
Harry Barnes MP,
House of Commons,
London SW1 0AA.

The train takes the strain, we'll take the risk



Mark Lawson

WEWERS of Tuesday night's edition of Newsnight must briefly have wondered if the comedian Chris Morris — whose new series had been removed from that night's schedules by Channel 4 on the grounds that his spoofs and practical jokes on public figures were thought too vicious — had retaliated by turning up in satirical character on the main rival channel. A man introduced as "Robert Malpas, co-chairman of Eurotunnel" had come into the studio to discuss subterranean safety in the light of Monday's freight-train accident. Peter Snow suggested that, given an inferno in which many people had suffered smoke-inhalation injuries, safety procedures did not seem to have worked. "I wouldn't say they don't seem to have worked," Malpas demurred. "They don't seem to have been applied at

the time in the way one might have expected." Turning to specific train-safety measures, Snow asked: "There was a de-coupling system? Malpas conceded that there had been. "And that didn't work?" But here, again, Snow had gone too far for his interviewee. "It wasn't used," Malpas preferred to say, making little fluttering gestures with his left hand to indicate the importance of imprecise language. The Malpasism, you felt, might soon become as celebrated in the language as the Malpasism.

This was the transport industry equivalent of Tony Benn's celebrated claim on the nights of Labour election defeats that socialism could not be said to have failed because it had never been tried. The same, it seemed, was true of the de-coupling system on Eurotunnel. We generally think of such linguistic hair-splitting — or "spin" — as a phenomenon of electoral politics; an occasionally entertaining but arid game with few human consequences. But here was spin-doctoring applied to a situation in which actual doctors had been involved. Politics has rotted our culture, and we have come to a world in which the senior personnel in all organisations seem to have been trained in, or to have developed instincts for,

factual evasion and positive presentation. The president of Eurotunnel, Patrick Ponselle, though not quite a euphemist in military circles, gave a similar case for the use of bomb-safety. Yet airlines routinely promote revenue ahead of protection, a tactic which is unaffected by regular catastrophic crashes. There was a nearly unendurable argument after the Lockerbie disaster for the installation of explosive-sensitive scanners in all major airports and a reasonable case for the use of bomb-proof baggage pallets on board. Yet these precautions have been ignored on the grounds of cost.

And, although a fictional depiction of highway mayhem (the movie Crash) was banned this week by Westminster council, the frequent real-death traffic fatalities have never led Peter Snow or other interviewers to question the prospects for the M1, or the continued viability of

people there. And British Airways, which admitted yesterday that one of its fleet had flown worryingly close to a military missile over Turkey, went away with a mild apology and a declaration, not submitted to independent scrutiny, that passengers had not been in any danger, rather than a commercial closedown.

This is not to exaggerate Eurotunnel. Its safety procedures should clearly be examined, and there is a compelling argument that the use of lattice-sided wagons on the freight routes (against much advice) placed profit before safety. Yet airlines routinely promote revenue ahead of protection, a tactic which is unaffected by regular catastrophic crashes. There was a nearly unendurable argument after the Lockerbie disaster for the installation of explosive-sensitive scanners in all major airports and a reasonable case for the use of bomb-proof baggage pallets on board. Yet these precautions have been ignored on the grounds of cost.

The final difficulty is that the undersea rail link between Britain and France was never strictly called for. The

car and the aeroplane, and the risks attending use of them, have come to be regarded by all but a few Liberal Democrat cyclists as a necessary evil. The shortage of viable alternatives leads people to ignore the possibilities of fatal incineration. But the Channel Tunnel is a luxury, a glamorous alternative to ferry or jet. Given the residual worries about burrowing, any excuse not to use it is likely to be persuasive.

Because their project was not strictly necessary, invites morbid suspicion and cannot be regarded as technologically or historically inevitable, the companies operating the Channel Tunnel have effectively been asked to produce a risk-free form of travel, a requirement to which no other transport operator has ever been held. For, even before the invention of the wheel, there was the risk of infected blisters from too much walking.

Robert Malpas's disaster spin may have been amusing, but it would be even funnier if the Channel Tunnel having been undermined by a hysterical reaction to the possibility of very few zero-fatality accidents in the history of transportation, passengers will be forced to prefer the lethal highways, the blood-stained ferry routes, and the homicidal skies. The

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A rough ride on the autobahn



Martin Woollacott

DO THE Germans know their business? That is the German question which matters most to other Europeans. The road to a single currency and beyond has become a German road, or at least a road on which the traffic is marshalled by Germany. Have they thought it through. Have they weighed alternatives, are they sufficiently aware of their partners' as well as their own, are they imposing conditions which may undo the enterprise?

It is not surprising that Europeans should seek reassurance, even if the need for that reassurance is yet another burden on a country under strain. Monetary union has come to be presented not only as desirable and worthwhile but as essential if Europe is not to go into irreversible decline. This magnification is relatively new. When the idea of a single currency was first raised in earnest, the motive was largely political. It was a French plan to root Germany in Europe in the period after the fall of the Soviet Union and German reunification. In the years since, the idea that the single currency is also the essential element in restoring Europe's competitiveness and solving the unemployment crisis has come more to the fore. In Germany, the globalisation debate which has, in the words of one academic, "suddenly erupted here" has subsumed the monetary union debate. Conversations about monetary union almost invariably begin with a long preamble on privileges that can no longer be afforded. One is led on from the need to trim the "social state" and create a flexible labour market in Germany to the need to trim it everywhere, and from there to European monetary union. Germany has pulled together, as aspects of a single super-system, the need to restore competitiveness, the completion of unification with the move to Berlin, the restoration of national freedom of action in such matters, for instance, as the despatch of troops abroad, and European monetary and political union. And, while there is occasional emphasis on the French origins of the single currency idea, Germany also sees the achievement of monetary union under the right conditions as something for which it, more than other countries, is especially responsible. It proposes to forge a renewal of European competitiveness as a necessary act of European leadership. It is competitiveness and the reform of the social state which have become the dominant elements in Germany's

conception of how its own and Europe's problems should be tackled. It is a recipe for austerity on a national and European level for years to come, not only in the approach to monetary union but through the operation of the stability pact for an indefinite number of years afterwards. In a lecture in Cambridge this week, Wolfgang Schäuble, the leader of the Christian Democrats party in the Bundestag, typically linked competitiveness, monetary union, the single market and the controlled deregulation that will produce "more flexible wages and salaries according to region, industry or company concerned". In this Europe, "if we want to win the fight against unemployment, in the long run monetary union is the only answer." What is worrying about this grand chain is that Germans may be paying too little attention to the experience of Anglo-Saxon countries, as well as failing to contemplate the possibility that even the most radical cuts in social costs will not be enough to restore competitiveness in a world where, for instance, Czech labour is eight times less expensive than German, or that even if high growth figures are once again achieved, it will be growth of the now familiar jobless or near-jobless kind. Germany already sees the coincidence of record export and record unemployment levels. All this before one even begins to examine the difficulties associated with monetary union: that the problems of low labour mobility and the

inability, under any foreseeable system, to rescue falling areas, that are so often raised. The assumption that the German "social state" can be modified in a controlled way is disquieting to Anglo-Saxons because Germans may not have examined enough how the processes of deregulation acquire their own momentum and slip beyond or away from what any government or directing group may have wished. Germany is already a more unequal society than it used to be. Its business class has begun to pay itself more even as workforces are reduced, and stands revealed, in a number of recent cases, as more corrupt and less competent than its previous image suggested. Firms are straining to break out of the institutions of national bargaining, unions are struggling with falling membership. Chancellor Helmut Kohl has shown recent signs of impatience with industrial chiefs who accepted union renunciation of wage increases but have failed to provide the additional jobs they were supposed to produce in return. It is perhaps another straw in the wind that Jürgen Schrempp, the Daimler-Benz chairman who had championed Anglo-Saxon-style "shareholder values" and led a campaign to cut sick pay, has made a notable retreat, calling in a speech for Germany to stay this side of a "threatening transition from a consensus to a confrontation society." Professor Ulrich Deichel recalls that "Mrs Thatcher said there is no such thing as society. Well, there

still is in Germany. We should learn from Great Britain and not have German Thatcherism." It is the somewhat erratic progress of Germany, leapt by "European order values" and then pulling back to reaffirm the importance of social peace, that is worrying. It would be better if Germany were more in command of the situation, particularly as the disciplines it insists should be imposed on Europe as a whole are bound to at least perpetuate unemployment and, in an only slightly preferable alternative, to enlarge the strata of low-paid jobs. At the end there is the idea that German and European standards of productivity and quality will intersect with lower wages and social costs to produce saleable goods and services and relatively full employment at a point that is not too uncomfortable. But this appears to be an act of faith rather than calculation. Europe has valued Germany for its industrial efficiency, its consensual social model, and its political stability, the three being intimately connected. The "social state", after all, was conceived by men determined to avoid a recurrence of the conditions in which fascism grew in Europe. Germany undoubtedly sees itself as trying to create the same synthesis on the European level, in the process renewing its own economy and social contract. Yet there are contradictions between this aim and the instruments chosen of which Germany does not yet seem fully aware.

Series concluded

In cold Blood



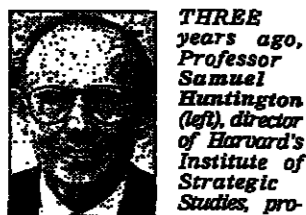
Martin Kettle

DLANE Blood's fight to use her dead husband's sperm stirs sympathy among all who witness it. Thousands of people apparently support her tenacious campaign. The Labour peer Lord Winston is trying to change the law on her behalf. She embodies those indomitable qualities which the British admire and which in other circumstances one might describe as spunk. Watching her anguished face as she pursues her fight, and listening to the intensity with which Mrs Blood pursues it, no one could fail to be impressed. It is doubly shocking that a woman should lose her husband and then be faced with such an unremitting intimate ordeal, least of all in public. It is outrageous. Mrs Blood invites us to take a position on her case and most people seem happy to enlist in her support. So I take a different view with some trepidation, because hers is a situation one would not wish upon anybody. But it is she who has put her predicament in the public arena and those of us who are uneasy about what she is doing are entitled to say so. I think Mrs Blood is in the wrong. I am pleased that she has lost her case again this week. I think the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority was right to stand its ground and to uphold both the letter and the spirit of the law. I hope that Mrs Blood continues to lose. I think she deserves unwavering support in her tragic ordeal. But that does not mean that she ought to get her way, least of all because people feel sorry for her. It isn't good enough to say that because Mrs Blood's situation touched our hearts, the law should be ignored to accommodate her, or even that it should be changed to stop another case like this. This is partly because the law is the law. But it is also because the law which she challenges is a good one and too important to tamper with, let alone in such circumstances. The dead cannot clarify their intentions. That is why, for example, in the parallel context of property, wills are so important and probate law so meticulous. Mr Blood's sperm is no different. He did not leave the written consent that the law requires, so his intentions are therefore not proved. This is not some detail that can be set aside merely to gratify pity. It goes to the heart of the matter. Don't let's kid ourselves. Without

such rigid rules, there would be conceptual chaos. The HFEA is right and responsible to refuse Mrs Blood. It is more important to hold the line on that point of principle than it is to give her what she wants. As she cannot prove her case, she should not win. She is not a pioneer but the thin end of the wedge. But Mrs Blood also seems to me to be wrong for more controversial reasons. All the coverage of the case assumes that it is right and natural for Mrs Blood to conceive a child with a dead father whom she loved and married. But is that so? I don't agree with that either. Call me Mr Conventional, but I find the whole thing decidedly creepy. It is pretty difficult to accept the way in which the sperm was obtained from the comatose Mr Blood in the first place. Would there be the same fearful popular enthusiasm for a live and healthy husband to impregnate his vegetative wife, I wonder? I doubt it. But, even if we allow the means, I find it hard to see anything natural in any circumstances about conception with a dead person. It cannot be right for a child to have a dead father who did not even know he was involved in the conception. After all, where do you draw the line? If Mrs Blood gets her way, once there is no shortage of supply, is to stop her doing it again? The implication of Mrs Blood's case is that she will feel just as entitled to impregnate herself with a second, third or fourth time with her husband's deep-frozen sperm. I hope I am not alone in finding this morbid, undesirable and a poor precedent, with or without his consent. The problem at the centre of the Blood case is that too many people, Mrs Blood included, seem to start from the presumption that a woman has an inalienable right to those of us who are uneasy about what she is doing are entitled to say so. If a woman wants a baby, they say, and there is a

If Mrs Blood gets her way once what, other than shortage of supply, is to stop her doing it again?

natural impediment to conception — be it infertility or the absence for some reason of an appropriate donor — then it will always be right for that impediment to be removed. That cannot be right. Mr Blood is 18 months dead. Mrs Blood may still be fertile when 18 months have become 18 years. It cannot be morally right or socially desirable to allow her access to her husband's sperm after 18 years, and if it is not right then it is not right now either. In my opinion the Sheffield hospital should never have obtained Mr Blood's sperm and should destroy it now. It is in no one's interest to drag out this saga any further. Mrs Blood and her supporters may see hers as a great and beautiful cause. I think it is misguided, undesirable, morbid and verges on moral blackmail. It should never have been allowed in the first place.



THREE years ago, Professor Samuel Huntington (left), director of Harvard's Institute of Strategic Studies, provoked an intense and furious debate with an essay in *Foreign Affairs*, *The Clash of Civilisations, or How the West Will Lose the World*. It was a dark and controversial vision: yet there were some who hailed it as a 1990s equivalent of George F. Kennan's historic essay on "Containment", which called for long and implacable struggle to outlast the Soviet empire. That was the intellectual rationalisation for the cold war; Huntington's thesis, now refined to take account of the furious critiques of Islamic and other cultures, is now the focus of the new US foreign-policy debate for the cold war's aftermath. *The Clash of Civilisations*, from which this essay is taken, was published last week in the US by Simon & Schuster. Henry Kissinger has called it "the most important book since the cold war".

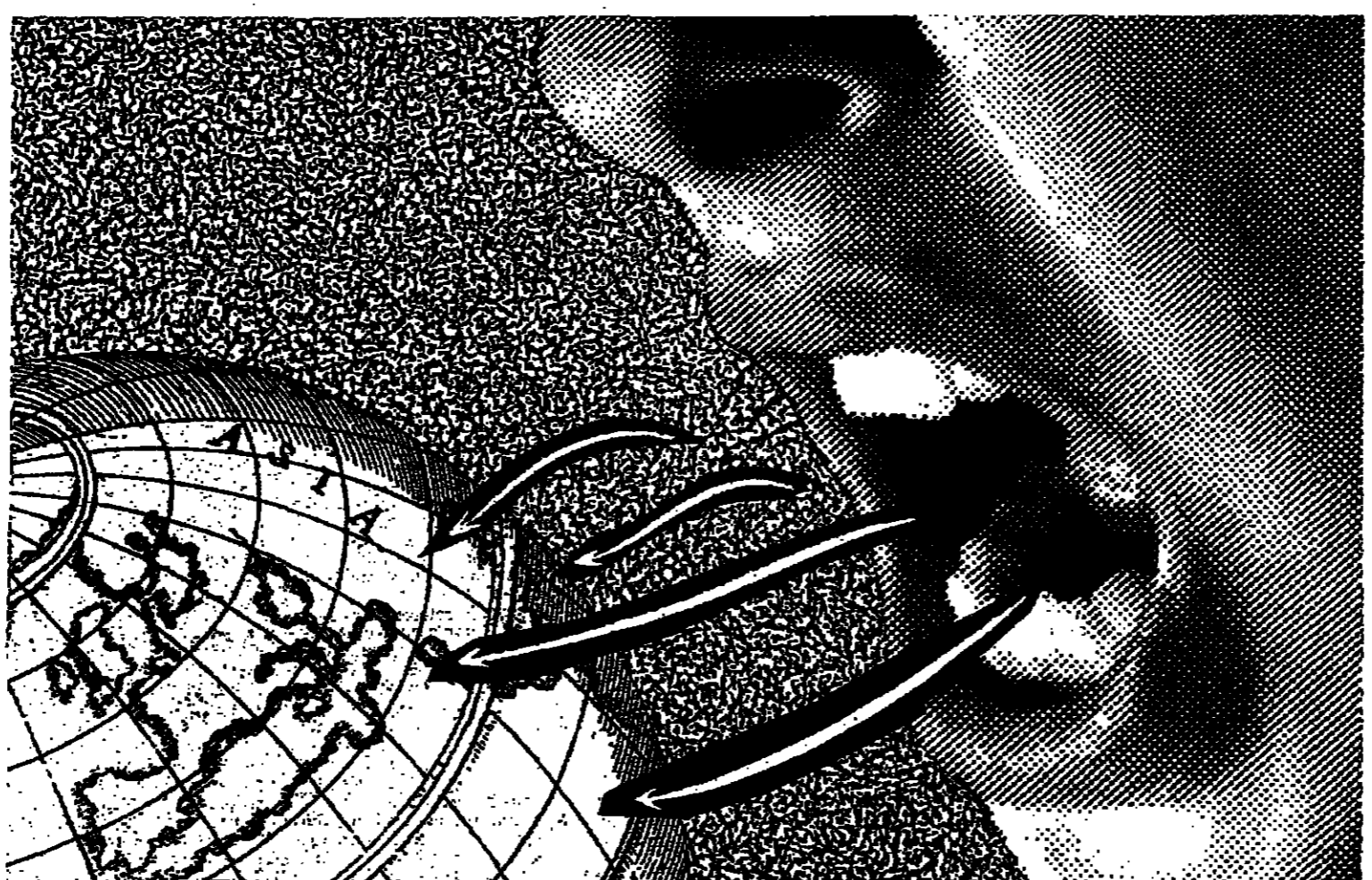


ILLUSTRATION: ANDRZEJ KLIMOWSKI

The West v the rest

IN RECENT years, Westerners have reassured themselves and irritated others by expounding the notion that the culture of the West is and ought to be the culture of the world. This conceit takes two forms. One is the Coca-colonisation thesis, its proponents claim that Western, and more specifically American, popular culture is enveloping the world. The other has to do with modernisation. It claims not only that the West has led the world to modern society, but that as people in other civilisations modernise they also westernise, abandoning their traditional values, institutions and customs. Both these project the image of an emerging homogeneous, universally Western world — and both are to varying degrees misguided, arrogant, false, and dangerous. Advocates of the Coca-colonisation thesis identify culture with the consumption of material goods. The heart of a culture, however, involves language, religion, values, traditions and customs. The argument that the spread of pop culture and consumer goods around the world represents the triumph of Western civilisation deprecates the strength of other cultures while trivialising Western culture by identifying it with fatty foods, faded jeans and fizzy drinks. The essence of Western culture is the Magna Carta, not the Magna Mac. The modernisation argument is intellectually more serious than the Coca-colonisation thesis, but equally flawed. The tremendous expansion of scientific and engineering knowledge in the 19th century allowed humans to control and shape their environment in unprecedented ways. Modernisation involves industrialisation; urbanisation; increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilisation; and more complex and diverse occupational structures. It is a revolution

ary process comparable to the shift from primitive to civilised societies that began in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Nile and the Indus in about 5000 BC. As the first civilisation to modernise, the West is the first to have fully acquired the culture of modernity. As other societies take on similar patterns of education, work, wealth and class structure, the modernisation argument runs, this Western culture will become the universal culture of the world. It does not necessarily follow, however, that societies with modern cultures should be any more similar than societies with traditional cultures. "Ming China... was decidedly closer to the France of the Valois," Fernand Braudel observes, "than the China of Mao Zedong is to the France of the Fifth Republic." Modern societies have much in common, but they do not necessarily merge into homogeneity. The argument that they do rests on the assumption that modern society must approximate a single type, the Western type; that modern civilisation is Western civilisation, and Western civilisation is modern civilisation. This, however, is a false identification. The West was modern long before it was modern. The time has come for the West to abandon the illusion of universality and to promote the strength, coherence and vitality of its civilisation. The interests of the West are not served by promiscuous intervention into the disputes of other peoples. In the era that is dawning, primary responsibility for containing and resolving regional conflicts must rest with the leading states of the civilisations dominant in those regions. "All politics is local politics," Tip O'Neill, the former Speaker of the US House of Representatives, observed, and the corollary to that truth is "All power is local power." Neither the UN nor the US can impose on local conflicts long-

lasting solutions that deviate from the realities of local power. In a multipolar, multi-civilisational world, the West's responsibility is to secure its own interests. The future of the West depends largely on its unity. Scholars of the civilisation see them evolving through times of trouble. Western civilisation has moved beyond its warring-states phase and is heading toward its universal-state phase. That phase is still incomplete, with the nation-states of the West cohering into two semi-universal states in Europe and North America. These two entities and their constituent units are, however, bound together by an extraordinarily complex network of formal and informal institutional ties. The universal states of previous civilisations were empires. Since democracy is the political form of Western civilisation, the emerging universal state of Western civilisation is a compound of federations, confederations, and international regimes. The problem for the West is to maintain its dynamism and to promote its coherence. Western unity depends more on events in the US than on those in Europe. At present the US is pulled in three directions. It is pulled south by the continuing immigration of Latin Americans; and the growing size and power of its Hispanic population; by the incorporation of Mexico into the North American Free Trade Agreement; and the possibility of extending NAFTA to other Western-hemisphere countries; and by the political, economic and

cultural changes in Latin America that make it more like the US. At the same time, the United States is pulled westward by the increasing wealth and influence of East Asian societies; by the continuing efforts to develop a Pacific community, epitomised in the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum; and by migration from Asian societies. If democracy, free markets, the rule of law, civil society, individualism and Protestantism take firm root in Latin America, that continent, whose culture has always been closely related to that of the West, will merge with the West and become the third pillar of Western civilisation. No such convergence is possible with Asian societies. Asia is instead likely to pose continuing economic and political challenges to the United States specifically and the West more generally. The third pull, toward Europe, is the most important. Shared values, institutions, history and culture dictate the continuing close association of the US and Europe. Both necessary and desirable is the further development of institutional ties across the Atlantic, including negotiation of a European-American free-trade agreement and creation of a North Atlantic economic organisation as a counterpart to Nato. The major current differences between Europe and America arise not from directly conflicting interests with each other, but from their policies toward third parties. Among other questions, these include the provision of support to a Muslim-dominated Bosnia, the priority of Israeli security needs in Middle Eastern policy, US efforts to penalise foreign companies that do business with Iran and Cuba, the maintenance of full economic sanctions against Iraq, and the part human rights and weapons proliferation concerns could play in dealing with China. Non-Western powers, espe-

cially China, have attempted to play one Western country off against another. The differences themselves arise largely from different geopolitical perspectives and domestic political and economic interests. Maintaining the unity of the West, however, is essential to slowing the decline of Western influence in world affairs. Western peoples have far more in common with each other than they have with Asian, Middle Eastern or African people. The leaders of Western countries have institutionalised patterns of trust and co-operation among themselves that, with rare exceptions, they do not have with the leaders of other societies. United, the West will remain a formidable presence on the international scene; divided, it will be prey to the efforts of non-Western states to exploit its internal differences by offering short-term gains to some Western countries at the price of long-term losses for all of them. The people of the West, in Benjamin Franklin's phrase, must hang together, or most assuredly they will hang separately. Promoting the coherence of the West means both preserving Western culture within the West and defining the limits of the West. The former requires, among other things, controlling immigration from non-Western societies, as every major European nation has done and as the US is beginning to do, and ensuring the assimilation into Western culture of the immigrants who are admitted. It also means recognising that in the post-cold-war world, Nato is the security organisation of Western civilisation and that its primary purpose is to defend and preserve that civilisation. Hence states that are Western in their history, religion and culture should, if they desire, be able to join Nato. Practically speaking, Nato membership would be open to the Visegrad states, the Baltic states, Slovenia and Croatia,

but not countries that have historically been primarily Muslim or Orthodox. While recent debate has focused entirely on its expansion, it is also necessary to recognise that, as Nato's mission changes, Turkish and Greek ties to Nato will weaken and their membership could either come to an end or become meaningless. Withdrawal from Nato is the declared goal of the Welfare Party in Turkey, and Greece is becoming as much an ally of Russia as it is a member of Nato. The West went through a European phase of development and expansion that lasted several centuries and an American phase that has dominated this century. If North America and Europe renew their moral life, build on their cultural commonality and develop closer forms of economic and political integration to supplement their security collaboration in Nato, they could generate a third Euro-American phase of Western affluence and political influence. Meaningful political integration would in some measure counter the relative decline in the West's share of the world's people, economic product and military capabilities, and revive the West's power in the eyes of the leaders of other civilisations. The principal responsibility of Western leaders is not to attempt to reshape other civilisations but to preserve and renew the unique qualities of Western civilisation. That responsibility falls overwhelmingly on the most powerful Western country, the US. American interests will be most effectively advanced if the US eschews those extremes and instead adopts an Atlanticist policy of close co-operation with its European partners, one that will protect and promote the interests, values and culture of the precious and unique civilisation they share.

Oxfam

Continuing crisis in Central Africa

The return of refugees from Zaire is one of the greatest movements of people the world has ever seen. Oxfam is providing water for the hundreds of thousands on the road home. An uncertain future awaits them.

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Arms race in the Aegean



Greece's tax and defend budget to cost the rich £11bn

EU's poorest nation must bite the bullet, writes Helena Smith

THE Greek people may be into their 11th year of economic austerity...

Further economic hardship by appealing to patriotic sentiment at a time of growing tensions between Greece and Turkey.

Join the first round of countries participating in the EU's economic and monetary union.

Athens to rake in its huge public-sector deficits if it is to keep pace with its partners.

post of being the EU's poorest member state — and is also among Nato's biggest weapons spenders.

the only way to maintain a military balance with Turkey, which has likewise recently increased its expenditure on defence.

Mr Simitis, a moderniser who is keen to please the mandarins in Brussels...

Wake of conflict: Turkish commandos return from the disputed Aegean island of Imia, or Kardak...



of further belt-tightening by slapping new taxes on property, bonds and treasury bills.

But there are real and increasing fears that the programme will be just as quick to exacerbate Greek-Turkish tensions...

Crossed lines from the EU

Telecom changes promise chaos

Nicholas Bannister and Julia Wolf

SPeAK TO A German businessman in private and he will tell you that he cannot wait for the day when newly privatised Deutsche Telekom starts to face real competition.

markets are to be liberalised from January 1, 1998. But the European Commission's hopes of immediate competition, and lower prices and costs for European businesses operating in global markets, are unlikely to be fulfilled.

licences to act as national telecom operators, and the government has indicated that they will be awarded next year.

local industry to lose competitive advantage because of high telecom costs.

competitors out, but Brussels expects to receive complaints about licensing authorities.

too much to the discretion of national regulators will also cause problems.

Bull markets ride Russia's big bang

David Hearst in Moscow

ASK the average investment fund manager what he or she knows about Russia, and you will probably get a detailed account of the state of Boris Yeltsin's left ventricle, or be reminded how the mafia settles its accounts.

tions in full this year. The situation is difficult. We have problems, and there will be certain problems in 1997.

Phrases like "steadily improving fundamentals" do not leap to mind when discussing Russia's crisis-ridden transition to a market economy.

His appearance probably had a reassuring effect on the eurobond issue, but it was the "fundamentals" of Russia's economy that told more on the hard-headed investor.

Buy Now, Pay May '97

Advertisement for a computer system with various software packages like Lotus 123, SmartDraw, and WordPro. Includes pricing, payment options, and contact information.

The town that refuses to die

Julia Glertz

HEAVY engineering company Sket stands as a symbol for East German industry, it was big, now it is bankrupt.

have joined the battle to keep the plant alive. Sket's tale is a familiar one in the former East Germany, where industry has shed a million jobs since 1991.

Additional reporting by Julia Glertz

It was Russia's first state sovereign borrowing in 80 years. The sum was twice that predicted, and even that issue was heavily oversubscribed.

Certainly not the International Monetary Fund whose team of examining magistrates is not prepared to release the monthly tranches of its \$10 billion loan.

The move has upset the works council, which believes the state should have stumped up another DM100 million and carried on.

Workers claim Sket is being allowed to fold so that rivals can take its markets.



Economics minister Yevgeny Yasin: Delights in 'difficulties'

Table with columns for country and bank sell rates. Includes Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, USA.

Advertisement for Eurocats featuring a cartoon by Kipper Williams. The cartoon depicts a man in a car with speech bubbles about car options and safety.

Handwritten text at the bottom of the page: ٥٥١٠ من الاموال

Rapid refit for the QE2

THE QE2 was gently nudged into dry dock at Southampton yesterday for a £12 million refit, writes Paul Edwards.

More than 1,000 workers will operate round the clock on the 963ft liner to have her ready for sea again in under three weeks.

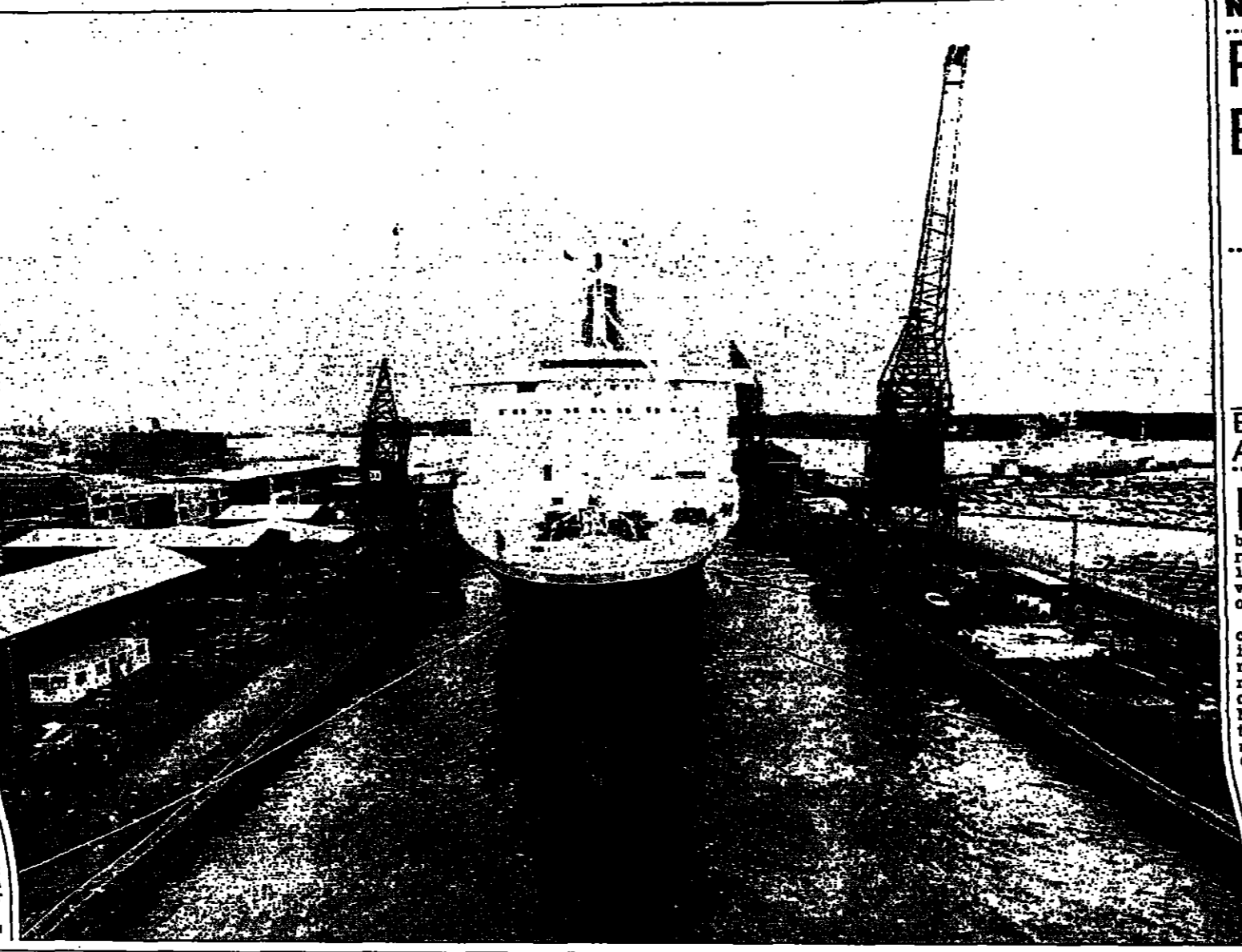
Apart from routine maintenance, there will be work on the Mauretania restaurant and the Princess Grill before tugs pull QE2 out of dock on Dec 12 for a three-night cruise followed by a world cruise.

The A&P Group's King George V dry dock, where the refit is taking place, was opened in 1933 to accommodate QE2's ancestors, the Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth.

It is the QE2's first refit in Britain for 15 years and follows disastrous publicity for Cunard after her refit in a German yard in 1994 when she sailed with workmen still on board and some passengers unable to join the cruise.

Months of planning has gone into the refit with close consultations between Cunard and A&P which won the contract against competition from German and Spanish repair yards.

PHOTOGRAPH: RUSSELL SACH



Notebook

Pounding on the European door



Edited by Alex Brummer

BARRING last-minute accidents, the Italian lira will be back inside the ERM by the start of trading on Monday morning.

The Italians believe it is crucial to be part of the ERM if the lira is to meet the technical criteria to lock its currency with the mark and become part of European Monetary Union (EMU) in two years' time. In terms of real commitment, Carlo Ciampi, the treasury minister, is putting on a good show, backed by his one-off 25 billion euro tax, designed to squeeze past the deficit-to-GDP criteria of 3 per cent.

Certainly, the restoration in value of the Euro-currency outside the ERM is considerable. The pound has had a tremendous renaissance, rising 13 per cent against the dollar and 17 per cent against the German mark, putting its value back to where it was in the week Britain came out of the ERM. The Swedish currency is also firm, but there the government is making the prudent point that it would be foolish to enter the ERM until it is sure there is public support for such a move.

Britain's position, as expressed by Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, is not far off this. He has argued that broad stability outside the ERM bands would be sufficient for the UK to qualify in spirit, if that is what the political consensus requires.

At present, given John Major's precarious position in his own party, even the slightest hint of eventual UK re-entry would be political dynamite. Better perhaps to meet the criteria quietly rather than engage in Italian-style grandstanding.

Regional power

IF THERE is one regional utilities merger that makes sense, it is that which fuses Welsh Water with Swalec to produce Hyder. Given the strong sense of regionalism in Wales, recognised by Labour's devolution proposals, it is a deal hard to argue against. Considerable benefits can be gained from linking utilities, particularly on the information technology front, although Hyder decided earlier this month against a new hi-tech platform.

In Hyder's results statement there is much allusion to stakeholders. It is as if the directors believe that co-option of Blair-style language will somehow inoculate the company from the only tax change Labour has promised: on the regulated utilities, where Hyder faces double jeopardy. No doubt the stock market will be glad that Hyder — following its acquisition — can boast a 24.9 per cent increase in profits to £100.7 million. That figure would have been considerably higher were Hyder not paying a sizeable interest charge of £46.1 million on its acquisition borrowing.

What the underlying figures show, however, is that there is still plenty to be reaped by a windfall tax — without threatening customers. Even before the tax, Hyder continues to punish one group of stakeholders, its employees, by trimming the work force yet again.

As for Hyder's non-regulated businesses, critical as they may be for generating dividends, it would be better if they were nearer home. Quite why a regional utility should think it has to play a role in, among other things, the Deakland Light Railway is unclear. Assets tied up in such schemes could have been better deployed in Wales.

Global banks

BANKING overseas has long been a high-risk business, as almost all of our clearers have learnt in recent times: Midland in California, NatWest on the eastern seaboard of the US, Barclays in South Africa, and Lloyds in Latin America.

But, while the UK sits on its hands others are expanding globally, such as ABN-Amro through its \$1.9 billion (£1.5 billion) bid for Standard Federal in the US, and Latin American expansion.

It would be disastrous for Britain as a financial centre and a commercial ally if the UK banks were to become obsessed — as they appear to be — with domestic concerns.

The UK banking market is starting to look awfully crowded. In the past few days, Virgin has indicated it wants to join Sainsbury, Standard Life, the Prudential, not to mention the battalions of converting building societies, in selling directly to the consumer. The more traditional banks are likely to find the going increasingly tough against this low-cost competition.

History suggests that it is when British industries start looking in on themselves — as the UK car industry did

European officials meet to fix rate for lira's re-entry weeks before deadline under Maastricht criteria

Italy set to rejoin the ERM

John Palmer and Mark Miller

THE Italian lira was last night poised to rejoin the exchange rate mechanism only a few weeks ahead of the deadline laid down under one of the Maastricht criteria for monetary union.

Senior monetary officials from the 15 European Union governments will meet in Brussels today to fix the terms for the lira's re-entry into the ERM, from which it was ejected, along with the pound, after the currency crisis of 1992.

The move comes after the Italian government yesterday formally handed over to its EU partners details of the country's austerity budget, which was approved this

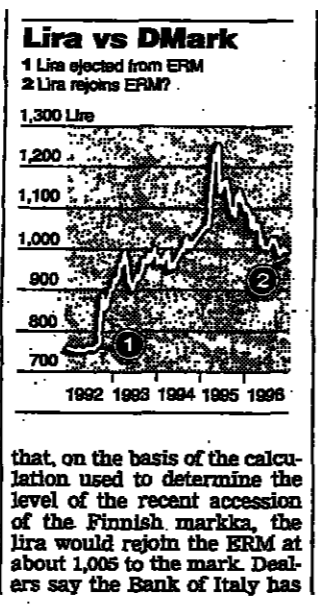
week by the Italian parliament. The prime minister, Romano Prodi, said that the lira would return to the currency grid in a matter of "a few hours or a few days".

The Italian authorities have made no secret of their desire to see the lira back in the ERM but the key issue has been the rate at which it would rejoin the system.

France, in particular, has in the past protested against what it saw as the competitive advantage gained by Italian exporters from the fall in the value of the lira after its ejection from the ERM.

Yesterday, however, treasury minister Carlo Ciampi suggested that the differences on the issue had receded.

Some banking sources believe that the lira could return to the system at between 950 and 1,000 to the German mark. Others suggest



been intervening on the foreign exchanges over the past few days to hold the lira at around the 1,000 level and last night the Italian currency was trading at 998.9 to the mark.

Under the terms of the Maastricht treaty, membership of the ERM is a prerequisite for countries wishing to sign up for the single currency. On the basis that monetary union does go ahead on schedule at the beginning of 1999, countries have until the end of the year to join the system.

"Italy intends to be one of the founding members of the EMU," Mr Ciampi said. "Italians are determined to do everything necessary to be an element of stability and not an element of tension or distortion."

However, both the UK and Sweden have argued against

the ERM condition for monetary union, saying that the ERM now is very different from that which was in operation when the Maastricht treaty was signed.

Britain has made clear it will not rejoin the ERM, while Sweden's central bank governor, Urban Bäckström, said yesterday: "Surely it is exchange rate stability as such which matters, not the institutional arrangement".

The German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, stressed yesterday that he wanted to see as many countries as possible sign up for the first wave of monetary union. However, he stressed there could be no weakening of the Maastricht criteria which set limits for public sector debt and deficits, inflation and interest rates.

"The Maastricht criteria must be met without ifs and

but, and that means in the long term," Mr Kohl said in a speech to 800 European bankers in Frankfurt.

Rebutting market speculation that the Maastricht criteria could be watered down to allow more countries to join, he said: "When I am talking about criteria, I mean the criteria. Anyone who thinks that we can turn away from this chosen path is deluding himself."

In Helsinki, the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, who is the current president of the European Council, said he expected the EU summit next month in Dublin would agree on a controversial stability pact binding countries in the single currency bloc. But he went on: "If we do not reach [an agreement] in Dublin, that is not the end of the day. It can be reached in January or February."

Alliance executives set to cash in despite the climate

Building society board ignores critics and opts for lucrative share options

TERESA HUNTER

ALLIANCE & Leicester was criticised yesterday for planning the most lucrative executive share option scheme for a building society poised to float on the stock exchange. The options will be granted almost immediately after its flotation.

Board members at other societies have rejected such packages for fear it could open them up to charges of using their own pockets.

The society's chief executive, Peter White, could receive options worth more

than £500,000, under a scheme whereby options can be granted of up to twice executives' basic salary in the first year, with the approval of the society's remuneration committee.

A Halifax spokesman said Britain's biggest building society had decided to waive share options because it believed they contravened the spirit of Greenbury, the top people's voluntary pay code.

He said: "We have seen the directors of privatised utilities criticised because they gained through share price rises which it could be argued had very little to do with the companies' actual performance, and we did not want similar allegations levelled against the Halifax."

"We also wanted members to be confident that directors were recommending conversion because they believed it was in customers' best interests and that they did not stand to gain personally."

A Woolwich spokesman said it had decided against offering share options, because it wanted its scheme to be as transparent as possible. He said: "We felt they were not appropriate at the point of conversion — although they could be introduced at some stage in the future."

The Lloyds Bank bid for Cheltenham & Gloucester did provide share options for senior executives — but

these could not be exercised until three years after the takeover. Abbey National executives were not offered share options as part of the flotation scheme — although some were granted two years later.

A Halifax spokesman said: "The construction of this share scheme is looking ever more cynical. We are furious that long-standing loyal customers will receive the same flat payment as last-minute carpetbaggers. This is even more unfair if the senior executives can make vast profits from share options."

A spokesman for the A&L investors' group headed by Patrick Montaigne said: "The construction of this share scheme is looking ever more cynical. We are furious that long-standing loyal customers will receive the same flat payment as last-minute carpetbaggers. This is even more unfair if the senior executives can make vast profits from share options."

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to be approved by its remuneration committee, which would impose performance conditions. Maximum options of four times salary could be granted over a 10-year period. Options during the first year will be restricted to twice salary. Last year, Peter White earned a basic salary of £258,000, and £181,000 for the first six months of this year.

The transfer document does point out that options will not normally be exercised within three years of granting. However, they can be exercised early if an employee leaves the company, if it is taken over or reconstructed, or with the permission of the remuneration committee.

News in brief

Naafi in mail order deal

Naafi, the official trading arm of the UK armed forces, has set up a mail order business called Select Catalogues in partnership with Lanica Trust, Andrew Regan's investment vehicle. Turnover in its first year of operation is expected to hit £20 million.

The deal, predicted by the Guardian on Thursday, gives Select exclusive worldwide rights to sell non-food products and services to the nearly 250,000 service personnel.

Minerva priced at 150p

Shares in Minerva, the commercial property group headed by David Garrard, will be priced at 150p when trading begins next Thursday. The placing, sponsored by HSBC Samuel Montagu, will value Minerva at £144 million and raise net proceeds of £70.5 million to fund acquisitions and reduce debt.

Wm Cook rejects bid

Steel castings manufacturer William Cook yesterday rejected a £77.7 million bid by Triplex Lloyd, the car parts maker, as being too low. Responding to publication of its

predator's offer document, it said the bid "considerably undervalues the company" and demonstrated Triplex Lloyd's "clear lack of understanding of William Cook's business and markets".

Predator challenged

Northern Electric described the letter which CE Electric is posting to Northern shareholders urging them to accept the US predator's offer as a "backward looking document". It said the information on which CE had based its financial comparison with the agreed bid by Dominion Resources for East Midlands Electricity was out of date.

John Lewis climbs

The John Lewis Partnership said sales at its UK department stores in the 16 weeks to November 16 were up 14.8 per cent year-on-year. Total sales were up 12 per cent in the period.

Hambro agreement

Consolidation in the property management sector intensified yesterday as Hambro Countrywide announced an agreed bid for RPT Management Services. The 114p-a-share cash offer values RPT at about £2.4 million.

Profits flow at Welsh utilities company after cost-cutting

NICHOLAS BARNISTER

HYDER, the group formerly known as Welsh Water, has boosted first-half profits by a quarter after cutting costs and jobs following its £283 million takeover of South Wales Electricity.

The group said it achieved better-than-expected savings of £16 million as a result of the merger and was on course to meet its target of savings of £46 million a year by 1999.

Its plan to reduce the work force by 900 by the end of the millennium was ahead of schedule, with 275 jobs going during the first half.

Anger as privatised HMSO cuts 900 jobs

PATRICK DONOVAN
City Editor

MORE than 900 jobs are to be axed at the former Her Majesty's Stationery Office as a direct result of the privatisation of the organisation which publishes everything from Hansard to the Highway Code.

The decision to shed around one third of the workforce represents part of a radical restructuring drive by its new consortium of owners led by Rupert Pennington, the former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England.

The announcement by the National Publishing Company fuelled an outcry by unions and Labour, which has accused the Government of selling the HMSO at far below its market price. The deal was backed by venture capitalists Electra Fleming.

The loss-making group, which is now known as The Stationery Office, yesterday said the job losses resulted from plans to streamline its 14 operating businesses into four core operations.

News in brief

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Electrolux linked with Berisford takeover bid

ROGAR CORW

ELECTROLUX, the Swedish domestic appliance maker, was yesterday rumoured to be the unnamed predator ready to make a £350 million takeover bid for the conglomerate Berisford.

Electrolux refused to comment and Berisford's chief executive, Alan Bowkett, would not add to his company's statement yesterday that an approach had been made this week which may lead to a takeover offer. Hopes for a takeover pushed up the company's shares by 31p to 182p.

Announcing that it would not be able to go ahead with a planned buy-back of loan stock, the company said: "Formal interest in an offer being made for the company has been expressed to Berisford... this interest has only been of a preliminary nature such that it is unclear whether it may or may not lead to an offer being made."

Mr Bowkett refused to say whether one or more approaches had been received. He said it was hoped that an

Electrolux linked with Berisford takeover bid

offer would either crystallise or disappear within a couple of weeks and that Berisford would retain its independence. "I am looking forward to the current year. There are lots of very interesting things that we are planning to do," he said.

Analysts speculated that acquisitive conglomerates such as Wessell or Tomkins might be interested in Berisford, but Electrolux was a more likely suitor. The appliance maker would be interested in Berisford's US catering equipment company Welbilt, which was acquired by the UK company last year.

Berisford was originally a commodities business but hit trouble after diversifying in the 1980s. Mr Bowkett moved in after the business had been reduced to a virtual shell and began to build it into a new conglomerate. But his purchases of the Magnet kitchen equipment company and Welbilt have been disappointing.

The company announced yesterday that profits for the year to September were slightly down after computer problems at Welbilt.

The Budget

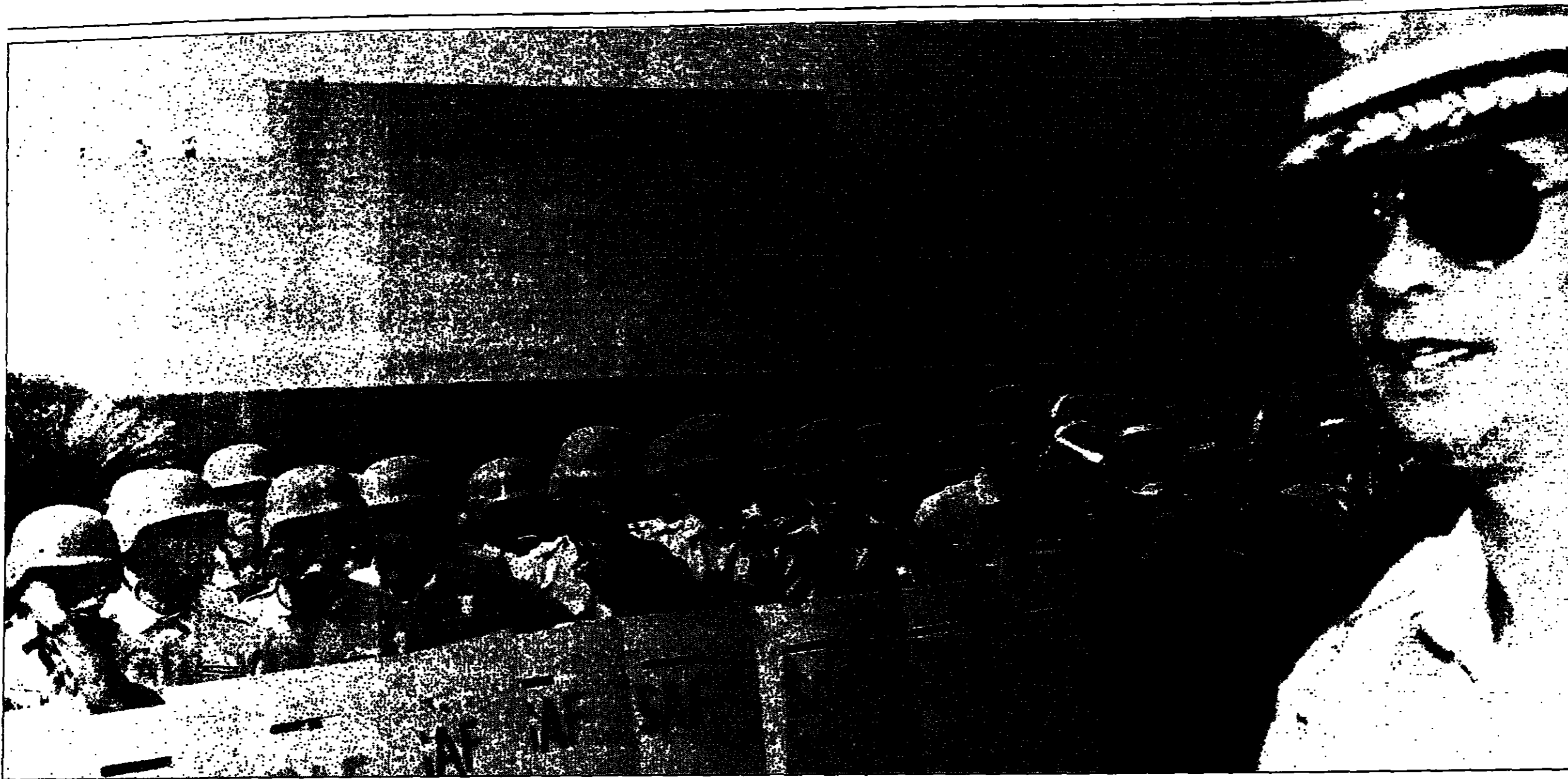
THE ECONOMICS PAGE: As the Budget looms and speculation increases, Larry Elliott asks if the Chancellor will resist temptation to act irresponsibly and Dan Nichol translates Christie's speak into English.

WELL WISE: In a new service to readers, Guardian writers and tax specialists from accountants Coopers & Lybrand will answer questions about the Budget, on a 24-hour helpline. Please post your questions to: tax@guardian.com or write to: tax@guardian.com, 25 Abchurch Lane, London EC4A 3DF. The Guardian Web site <http://www.guardian.com> will also be updated by e-mail to tax@guardian.com.

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Security shield... police officers in gas masks guard the convention centre where Apec leaders will hold their meeting

PHOTOGRAPH: PAT ROULE

Tigers meet tribesmen

Welcome to Manila. Please don't upset the security guards. And don't expect miracles. NICK CUMMING-BRUCE reports

PERHAPS only in Manila could God and Mammon find such effusive and simultaneous indulgence. The city is festooned with Christmas trees, cribs and coloured lights on an even more lavish scale than usual as it prepares to receive leaders of 18 Asian and Pacific Rim countries for an annual summit that is becoming one of the more eye-catching fixtures on the international agenda.

Manila and Subic Bay, the former American naval base where leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum will hold their summit, are also in the grip of unprecedented security. The Philippines has committed \$3.5 million (\$2 million) and some 30,000 men to shielding the meeting against a motley array of enemies, from communist insurgents and Islamic militants to the participants in a leftist "peasants' summit".

But President Fidel Ramos probably has more to worry about in trying to bring Mon-

day's summit to a conclusion that lives up to the mantras of free trade and open regionalism concocted at earlier Apec assemblies. With two days to go, no one is yet quite sure of the outcome.

At Seattle in 1993, the leaders set their sights on creating "a community" of economies in the region. In Indonesia the next year, they set deadlines for achieving "free and open trade and investment" — 2010 for Apec's industrial economies and 2020 for other members. Last year's summit in Osaka focused on a blueprint for putting these goals into action.

After all the visionary stuff, the Philippines was charged with what Cesar Bautista, its trade secretary, calls "a dirty kitchen year". Subic "will be the first real test of whether Apec's member economies mean what they have said", according to Fred Bergsten, director of Washington's Institute for International Economics and one of the "wise men" who steered leaders towards framing these goals.

With only a fortnight or so

to the World Trade Organisation ministerial meeting in Singapore, Apec leaders are also conscious of the opportunity they have to act as a force for liberalisation on a still wider, multilateral stage.

After all, their members account for 40 per cent of the world's population, about 46 per cent of exports and well more than half of its output. They can also dangle before a salvaging world the need for new infrastructure in Asia worth somewhere in the region of \$1.5 trillion over the next few years and the opportunities offered by booming intra-Asian trade.

Yet the brash, anything-is-possible self-confidence of the world's fastest-growing economies has given way over the past 12 months to hesitation that has slowed the work of shaping common positions and prompted Mr Bergsten to warn there is "a serious risk of failure at Subic".

A club of countries looking after the needs of Chinese talpans, Detroit auto-workers and penis-gourd-wearing stone age tribesmen of Papua New Guinea could be excused for teething troubles. The diversity that helped make Apec such an eye-catching addition to regional trade groupings is complicating the task of finding common ground.

The headaches explain why Apec members yesterday lifted a moratorium on new members, but put off announcing the lucky countries until 1998. Russia, India, Peru and Vietnam are in the queue for membership and many more are interested.

But Asian countries used to acclaim as the shooting stars of the world economy are also having to come to terms with less flattering reviews and hard questions about their ability to compete.

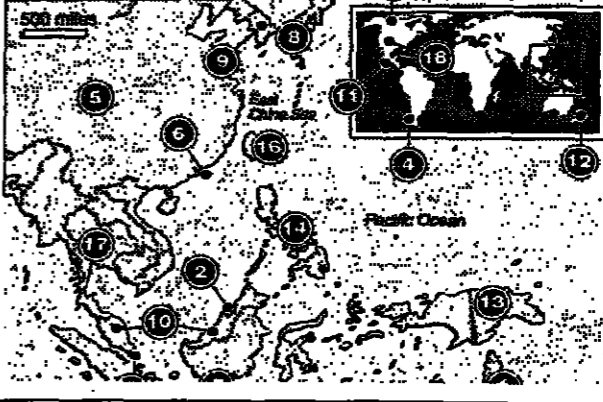
The Philippines, luckily as best to this summit, is not one of them. President Ramos is basking in sudden acclaim for his country as Asia's next tiger, brought by rising growth across the board. The summit is a golden opportunity to showcase the turnaround he has achieved in this sprawling archipelago that was written off as Asia's sick man in the 1980s and now luring back investors.

Its neighbours to north and south are less fortunate. After the double-digit growth of the 1980s, South Korea's aggressively expanding conglomerates find their competitiveness eroded by soaring costs and an almost neolithic financial sector.

South-east Asian countries are coming to terms, too, with a sudden fall-off in the exports that have kept their tiger economies purring, while trying to assure invest-

At the summit party

Members of Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation	Population (Million)	GDP (US\$100bn)	Per capita income (US\$1000)
1 Australia	18.2	148.2	14.2
2 Brazil	0.2	0.2	0.2
3 Canada	32.1	291.1	29.1
4 Chile	13.3	13.3	1.3
5 China	1,150.0	115.0	11.5
6 Hong Kong	6.1	6.1	6.1
7 Indonesia	189.2	18.9	1.8
8 Japan	125.2	125.2	12.5
9 South Korea	45.1	45.1	4.5
10 Malaysia	18.9	18.9	1.8
11 Mexico	91.5	91.5	9.1
12 New Zealand	3.5	3.5	3.5
13 Papua New Guinea	4.2	4.2	4.2
14 The Philippines	65.1	6.5	6.5
15 Singapore	2.9	2.9	2.9
16 Taiwan	21.2	21.2	2.1
17 Thailand	62.5	6.2	6.2
18 United States	253.0	253.0	25.3



The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

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THIS seems to be a minority view. "The downturn now is strictly cyclical," counters Bob Broadfoot of Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, also in Hong Kong. "It's a rude awakening or a warning signal that they can't take double-digit growth for granted and need to push reform if they don't want a cyclical problem to become a structural one."

Either way, the uncertainty has taken some of the lustre off Apec members' earlier commitments to the heady vision of an "anti-Apec summit" staged by non-government organisations and labour groups alleges free trade delivers benefits to the economic powers at the expense of the poor. Some Asian politicians and officials, looking at US tactics on textiles and issues like labour standards, seem inclined to agree.

American efforts to win support for what on the face of it looks an attractive Information Technology Agreement may be a casualty of such sentiment. The proposal would remove by 2000 tariffs on a wide range of computer hardware, software and data processing equipment crucial to Asian consumers as well as US and Japanese producers. But it has won less than ful-

some support. Tough haggling on the scope of the package and timing of the phase-out appear to keep the outcome in the balance.

By the same token, President Ramos has faced an uphill task extracting commitments to tariff reductions from some Apec members in the "individual action plans" each submitted for the summit.

Countries like Australia, New Zealand and Singapore put in what by general consent were exemplary papers, and China, at best cautious on multilateral commitments, a positive effort. The US and Japan, preoccupied with elections, stirred hardly at all. Taking their cue from the big powers, others offered little they would not have offered anyway under their commitments to the WTO.

The Philippines tactfully professes itself pleased. "We have agreed on baselines and a format," says Jesus Estanislao, a former finance minister and adviser to President Ramos on Apec matters. "In April we thought we couldn't do it, we didn't have the common data. Now we have a frame of reference."

It is unrealistic to expect anything more at this stage, economists say. The work done for this summit opens the way for several years of tough warfare over the eye-glaring minutiae of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

But there is a suspicious move, as some analysts see it, to broaden the summit agenda. President Ramos's determination to raise the profile of private-sector business — apparently in the face of disdain from the US — has won broad approval. The blunt message from local corporate chiefs is that if they moved as slowly as government they would have been out of job long ago.

The host's plan to include debate on developing the Apec community draws mixed reviews, however. "If they end up talking about community spirit at Subic," snapped a western diplomat, "you will know the whole thing has been a bit of a damp squib."

But this is where President Clinton may prove particularly useful to his hosts. International trade issues remain, by all accounts, close to his heart. His enthusiasm for Apec also remains unstinted, for the most persuasive of reasons: national self-interest.

US trade negotiators point out America does substantially more trade with Asia and the Pacific than with Europe — about \$880 billion worth, two-thirds of US world trade. Apec "helps anchor us in the region," says ambassador John Wolf. It "provides a

Quick Crossword No. 8291

Across

1 Exclusive control (of sales) (8)
5 Group, maybe musical (4)
9 Set (5)
10 Old cab or angry dog (7)
11 Fiat truck (6,3)
12 Baby's toy or snake (6)
14 Goat or rabbit (6)
17 Same speech sounds starting (12)
20 Common bird (7)
21 Angry (Old English) (5)
22 Go down — in the kitchen (4)

Down

1 Converted stables (4)
2 Disregard (7)
3 Civilian acting as soldier (12)
4 Story or inscription (5,3)
6 Permit (5)
7 Racing scene by Frith (5,3)
8 Superstructure of submarine (7,5)
12 State of Little Rock (8)
15 Smelly (7)
16 Development (8)

18 Study or discover (5)
19 Footwear (4)

Guab

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The Guardian

the week



Guns aim abroad

Britain's shooters feel betrayed. Their guns, bullets and businesses are being taken away from them. Now they are looking for a new place to hang their holsters and discharge their anger. **Christopher Elliott** reports

SMALL red lettering picks out the words from the background of peeling paint over the shop which sits at the end of a nondescript suburban parade in north London. The Gunshop, the lettering says. Inside, but not for much longer, stands Joe Beatham. He is surrounded by some of the £40,000-worth of pistols and accessories that he says the Government has rendered worthless: 9 mm Brownings, 44 Magnum Smith & Wessons, shoulder holsters and boxes full of ammunition. As a result of what he perceives as the state's "betrayal", he is moving his family and his business out of the country: lock, stock and barrel, so to speak.

"I am going to see how much money I can get out of the Government and then move out. I am going to see that me and my family never contribute another bit of revenue to this country again. I have been betrayed for political expediency." Beatham, a Liverpoolian, aged 43, says his plan is to find a suitable property near Calais or Boulogne and set up a shooting complex. There people will be able to use the "rifles that were taken off them in 1988 and the pistols that were taken from them in '96". He will not be alone. Since Parliament's vote on Monday in the wake of the Dunblane massacre, banning handguns larger than .22 calibre and requiring smaller pieces to be kept at gun clubs, 60,000 licensed handgun holders in the UK have been thrown into a spin. They are now bitterly contemplating their future, and for many that means packing bags and taking their guns or their entire lives abroad. Scotland Yard and other police forces have already seen an increase in applications for European passes to travel with guns while the Department of Trade


and Industry reports a rise in the number of requests for export licences. There is a small but growing army on the march, fuelled by the loss of a sport and in many cases livelihoods. The raw anger of the shooting fraternity (most are men) blazes out of the November issue of Target Gun, the official journal of the National Pistol Association. Slapped across many of the standard advertisements for 22LR Beretta Mod 76 pistols and 9 mm 147 gram jacketed bullets are mock flyposters which leave no room for restraint or doubt. "Entire business MURDERED by Thomas Hamilton" lies across the half-page advert for Shooters, a Welsh rifle and pistol club. Another advert for Howitzer Products, based in Oxfordshire, has this stamped all over it: page 14

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CAMBRIDGE



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the week that was

Us on us

The British view

A mysterious light has been floating around in the early morning sky in the Vale of Clwyd. Mr Tom Prydderch and his wife Margaret of Rhyll Road, Denbigh, believe they saw a UFO. Two years ago Mrs Prydderch saw the same light dancing wildly around the sky. "It was definitely not a car, motorcycle or searchlight because we could see it in the sky, a very bright white light that was certainly not a star." A spokesman for RAF Valley on Anglesey said that nothing had been seen from the base at that time, but suggested that it might have been

a helicopter searchlight. A north Wales Police spokesman said that the police helicopter would not have been in the area at that time. Denbighshire Free Press & North Wales Times

Great Harwood florist, Hilda Styles, is making a 700-mile round trip by car to France in order to stock up with mistletoe for the festive period owing to a shortage of the seasonal sprig in England. "French mistletoe is much more romantic I think and I'm sure we'll get some jokers coming into the shop asking to try it out." The Blackburn Citizen News

Them on them

The global view

If the charge was found to be without foundation and the case dismissed, the wrong would be considerable. It would then be necessary to revise the law governing the accusation of ministers. It would also be necessary to seek out and punish those who set this in motion if it should turn out that their motivation was not the quest for justice and truth.

Le Sol on the alleged paedophile links of Belgium's deputy Prime Minister

"My power. So powerful. I could just go bang, bang, bang." These words of Martin Bryant brought

a court yesterday the closest to understanding what caused the gunman's explosion of resentment against the world. Sydney Morning Herald on the Tasmanian mass-murderer sentenced this week

San Francisco, the city that created a task force to consider legalising prostitution, is mulling over another bold idea — covering the cost of sex-change operations for city employees. Arthur Brizzona, chairman of the San Francisco Republican Party, and others say such operations are not medically necessary. They liken it to breast enhancement surgery. Evening Observer, Dunik-Fredonia, NY



THEME OF THE WEEK TRANSPORT PARANOIA

It wouldn't be going properly until it reached England, should ensure some cooking EuroTunnel week, the more the incidents of motorway mania, leading to the conclusion that perhaps driving is the best option for a transport paranoiac. Deal news about the traffic information Super Highway, the world's first country-wide traffic computer system.

Despite widespread panic attacks, no one was hurt, not physically anyway. Only five had been injured. It was the most serious incidents of motorway mania, leading to the conclusion that perhaps driving is the best option for a transport paranoiac. Deal news about the traffic information Super Highway, the world's first country-wide traffic computer system.

That, announced by the Department of Transport, will scan the road network and direct traffic on to clearer routes within seconds of a jam occurring. Any thought that computers being computers, they will certainly go into a bit of a panic in a jam. In a British public car park in Devon can be dismissed as auto-motocross. What the world needs in a week of transport horror

stories is a bit of climbing, escapee fiction. Highly recommended is the new novel by Michael Chabon, originator of pretty much everything from The American Strain to Come to Jurassic Park to 101. Airframe. Chabon's latest, is a cozy novel about insupportable failures of aircraft, clairvoyantly limited to come out in the worst recent year for air crashes.

When the queen of people's hearts opened hers

This week last year November 20, 1995

IT was the scoop of the decade, the interview of a career and the performance of a lifetime. When the Princess of Wales appeared on Panorama, on November 20, 1995, she had an audience of 23 million. The announcement of the interview received a mixed response. The Daily Mail used the headline "Profoundly Regrettable" and warned "Palace Will Not Forgive"; the Daily Mirror mused "Has She Gone Nuts?".



Diana has become a single parent, lost the title of HRH, gained an injunction against a "stalking" member of the paparazzi, severed links with 100 charities and, of course, her desire to be "queen of people's hearts". In the year that has passed,

year, agrees the interview was good for her. "She continues to be one of the most popular celebrities in the world. The interview did not damage her image; that was evident during the time I was working for her."

For the other main player in the Panorama saga, the outcome has been more mixed. The immediate impact was to propel this relatively inexperienced reporter into the limelight, and for a time Bashir was the Beeb's golden boy. He was the envy of hacks throughout Fleet Street, some of whom had dedicated more than 20 years of their life to royal reporting without coming close to such a sensational scoop. How on earth did he persuade Diana to open up her heart, they asked.

The Princess and the reporter... Martin Bashir, the envy of royal watchers

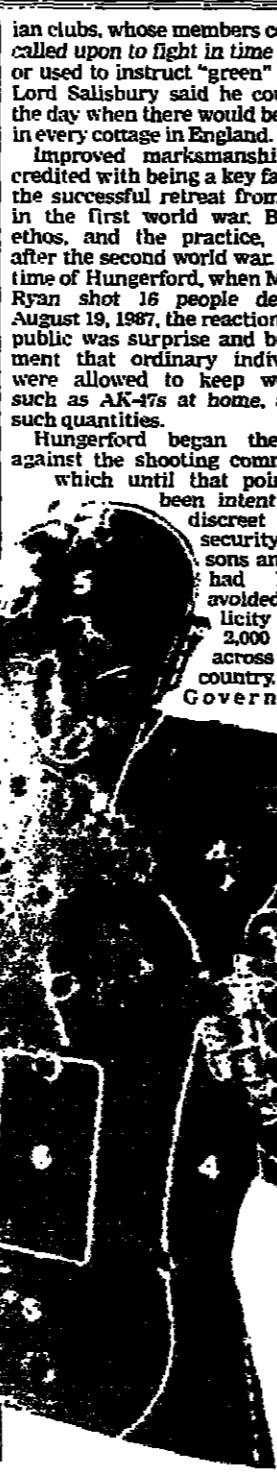
Hewlett blames this on the fact that Panorama put a lot of seasoned royal reporters' noses out of joint. "This was the interview everyone wanted, then in walked a relative unknown and snatched it. The interview symbolised a very important moment in national history as Diana had not spoken so openly since her marriage. Many things will be traced back to it, as the point when the inner workings of the royal family were exposed for us all to see."

ambushed whenever she took the kids to school.

In April, the Mail on Sunday alleged that Bashir, who is still with Panorama, used fake bank documents to lure Diana into being interviewed. Counter-attacking, the BBC hierarchy suggested jealous colleagues were waging a smear campaign against him. Hewlett maintains that the rumours of foul play were nothing more than that. "There is no question of the princess being tricked into doing the interview. The Mail on Sunday spent time and money trying to find something wrong, but all they got was a story without a punchline."

Guns aim abroad

page 13 "Eight staff at Howitzer. Eight more Hamilton victims". Individual shooters in the letters column invoke the US Bill of Rights and Thomas Jefferson in support of the battle to overturn the perceived injustice of the handgun ban. Correspondents blame the media, the Tories, the Labour Party, police and the emotional bandwagon of the anti-gun Snowdrop campaign for their plight. J. Clark from Merseyside expresses the common sentiment most lyrically in a poem: Truly the pen is mightier than the gun. Virtue hides prejudice. Self-righteousness prevails. And Liberty rises.



introduced laws in 1988 to ban self-loading rifles. Many shooters were aggrieved as they felt the police should have been penalised for poorly administering licensing controls rather than harassing law-abiding citizens. Gradually calm was restored. Jitters began to disappear. And then Dunblane...

Jan Stevenson, aged 53, is the editor and proprietor of the magazine, Handgunner. At its peak it sold 200 copies but it took a dive after Hungerford and was selling 15,000 at the time of Dunblane in March. The last issue came out in May as Stevenson, an Alabama-born former Oxford shooting blue, ceased publication to prepare evidence for Lord Cullen's inquiry into the massacre. When Stevenson returned to publishing he found that his regular 100 advertisers had just disappeared, either because their businesses had gone bust or they had simply withdrawn their support.

Guns have become the target of public anger...

The Kensington Rifle and Pistol Club, founded in 1908, was itself formed out of the post-Boer War movement. Now it is following a new path abroad. "We are currently in talks with a gun club in France that would allow us to use our guns," said Peter Brooksmith, the club's honorary secretary. He is just one among a number of dealers and shooters looking for a new start in a country that has a traditionally strong gun lobby. French legislation remains weak and firmly skewed in favour of hunters, who are drawn from all social classes. Political parties of left and right invariably quote social problems rather than gun ownership as the cause of escalating violence.

Legislation was restricted to a woolly move by the French government which ruled that all firearms — with the exception of starter pistols — should be registered with prefectures. But, except in extreme cases, prefects do not have the power to ban an individual from firearms ownership.

"The appeal of a day trip, said Richard Laws, secretary of the Shooters' Rights Association, who also runs pistol awareness training courses for bodyguards. His business books 1,000 night's worth of accommodation in rural France for its course trainees. "They will not pass to France, I am looking in the Verdun area. There are many people talking about relocating. You have to remember that a lot of shooters are over 40, their children are adults, so they can sell up and move if they want to. There is a lot of money going out of the UK in response to the Firearms Bill."

1. Which sex symbol left her husband because of his extremism? (a) Pamela Anderson (b) Sarah Ferguson (c) Elaine Spencer (d) Deya Picardo
2. "He's a crazy guy and life with him was a nightmare." Who was under attack? (a) Daniel Day-Lewis (b) Liam Gallagher (c) Tommy Lee (d) Action Man
3. "Of course he isn't gay. I had a real fight and had to tell quite a few other women to pee off." Who is the real man? (a) Tommy Lee (b) Prince Andrew (c) Peter Lilley (d) Michael Portillo
4. "John Major is impotent... Tony Blair is dumb." According to whom? (a) Paul Gascoigne (b) Liam Gallagher (c) Jilly Cooper (d) Barbara Cartland
5. No smoked salmon in the Holy See. Why? (a) David Icke (b) Michael Knighton (c) Terry Venables (d) Boutsos Boutsos-Ghali
6. Who couldn't have his "Cake" and eat it? (a) T S Eliot (b) W S Graham (c) W H Auden (d) e e cumtoma

Lucy the s with tea a cake



9. Name this deadly dog.
10. Who weighed in at 7lb 4oz?
11. What weighed in at 98lb?
12. "Zero pounds. Zero pence." A court victory for whom?
13. Who had a close encounter of the third division kind? (a) David Icke (b) Michael Knighton (c) Terry Venables (d) Boutsos Boutsos-Ghali
14. Who couldn't have his "Cake" and eat it? (a) T S Eliot (b) W S Graham (c) W H Auden (d) e e cumtoma

Answers, bottom left of this page

Proar in the cause at Frank's trip the toilet



Great food, shame about the attitude problem

SUNDAY: I'd almost forgotten how each economic boomlet turns some restaurateurs and barmen into arrogant creeps. Now that London is the "world's coolest city" it's almost impossible to get into a half-good eating place. Owners and staff are loving it. People now swap stories about rudenesses; a friend considerably phoned a West End restaurant to say she was running 10 minutes late. The maître d' snapped: "That doesn't matter. We've given your table away."

Norman Scott case has people asking whether an old man suffering from Parkinson's disease should have his past raked over like this. What I've always found puzzling is why anyone thought it necessary to kill Scott. Thorpe's homosexuality was a pretty open secret, and he may have been one of the few people in Parliament not to realise that. When the first rumblings began, I remember Clement Freud - then a Liberal MP - saying: "We've solved our crisis. John Curry is to become leader of the Liberal Party. And Jeremy has taken up ice-skating."

TUESDAY: The fire on the Shuttle sent me back to a book called An Accident Waiting To Happen, written by an acquaintance, Judith Cook. She quotes an expert who points out that the tunnel's length means that it "resembles a mine rather than a railway tunnel system, and any method of fire prevention needs to be based on the safety - large experience in this field."

THURSDAY: Cab drivers, notorious talkers, will usually do anything for extra cash, even poke fun at themselves. I saw a business consultancy ad on the back of a taxi jump seat: "For useful information, tap in." The next says: "For useless information, tap here", with an arrow pointing to the glass behind the driver's head.

The thing about the British middle classes is that, when they believe in something, they will work hard for no money

pected, and blast and fumes emerge into the tunnel proper, the fumes spreading through it at the mercy of whatever ventilation regime happens to prevail at the time.

Ms Cook was writing in 1989. If this was evident to a lay writer, seven years ago, why in heaven's name was nothing done?

WEDNESDAY: A glowing article in the Washington Post most gladden Mr Major. It describes how

this country has become the entire-prise centre of Europe, the foreign investment is pouring in, how unemployment is crashing every day to new low levels. The Post identifies the most important reason for this happy state of affairs. "At an average \$14 an hour, Britain has the lowest wages rates of any major industrialised country." Actually all the good things happening here apply to China, in spades. Industrial wages can be as low as \$4 a day, which is why investment is pouring in there too. No doubt at some point in the near future our wages going down will meet theirs coming up.

FRIDAY: We've just started work on this year's community page, Peter Pan. One of the great unmarked phenomena of modern British life is the local pantomime, which is much more satisfying

their ordinary Amdram, since if you do Oklahoma or Relatively Speaking, you're entirely in the hands of Rodgers and Hammerstein or Alan Ayckbourn.

But you can put whatever you like into a pantomime, using in plenty of local jokes and using the best local talent however you please.

Only two parts have been pre-acted (you tend to get a lot of muzzing about how it's all been fixed, often from people who feel they should be given a leading role the first time they turn up to an audition.) Captain Hook will be a woman (she went to RADA but was asked to leave after Restoration Dreams, "so my fan work is excellent") and Thicker Bell is to be a six-foot rapping dude.

FRIDAY: We've just started work on this year's community page, Peter Pan. One of the great unmarked phenomena of modern British life is the local pantomime, which is much more satisfying

SMALLWEED

THIS WEEKEND, if fear will be razed by speculation about Tony Blair. Not for once about his hair, or even his views on taxation, but about his choice of discs for a desert island. Before Sunday 22.15pm: which eight will he choose? After: just what do these choices imply? Smallweed will turn, as always in moments of crisis, to the Daily Mail, where we can rely on Dr Raj Persaud to unravel the mysteries which elude all others: by harping, for instance, that Blair has chosen this music because he likes the noise that it makes.

BUT PERHAPS it's unfair on Raj that he's got himself tagged in the psychological/psychiatric sector of life as Mr Ubiquity, a title which belongs to another. The most recent mouth of his territory belongs not to him but to Cary Cooper, industrial psychologist - and now, I see, also pro-vice-Chancellor - at UMIST. I have only five sightings of Raj in the prints for the past two months (though I'm told he also appears on TV with people called Richard and Judy), whereas Cary scores 26.

And so versatile! Helping to answer the question on everyone's lips: can spoon-bending and shamanism help business? Offering his services to the stress-racked Manchester City team he supports. (Stubborn as ever, the club that has still not come round to giving the job to Ann Widdecombe said thank you, but no.) Commanding John Major for finding a format (shirt sleeves) that suits his personality ("I'm going down to earth, ordinary"). Describing his own reactions to Steve Coppell's departure from Manchester City: "I feel schizophrenic (sic) about this."

But most of all he keeps thumping on about people working too hard, and their families. All utopian in the light of the row over the 48-hour week. Working more than 48 hours a week, Cary recently wrote, doubles the rate of coronary heart disease. I do hope he isn't working too hard.

I KEEP reading about the activities of Tory grandees. What's a grandee? The term arrives from the highest and most privileged class in notoriously snooty 18th century Castile: people of royal rank, or near it. From that it derives its modern meaning: according to Chambers, "a man of high rank or station." (Women need not apply, I suppose.) In the old days Tory grandees were people of wealth and vast acreage who hardly noticed their parliamentary salaries, belonged to exclusive clubs, and had nothing to lose by telling a falling prime minister that the time had come to depart. Now I see the term applied to the likes of Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith.

He may be a man of long parliamentary service and chairman of an influential committee, but his only club is the Travellers, and he used to work as a television presenter, which is hardly the stuff of grandeeship. Is he really One Of Them? Or is he just a grandee? He's a bit on the grand side, that's not a qualification. Many true Conservative Party grandees in the past were modest, even bashful, in their demeanour.

SHORT OF notions for Christmas? You will no doubt be grateful as Smallweed for the latest brochure of Ideas For Christmas published by the d-y house Wickes. What's your fancy for a gift-wrapped surprise stowed by the hearth this Yule? A four-way workbench that stretches the law and provides a remedy. But this, as I keep saying, takes us down the American path. A doctor makes a misdiagnosis and a routine eye test. A parent whose child falls off a local authority swing automatically consults lawyers. If I fall off a cliff it must be the National Trust's fault.

And, of course, few injuries are as catastrophic as your rabble-rousing language might suggest. "Stress" claims already provide rich pickings for those who have an interest in encouraging them.

WE CAN'T, it appears, find \$300 million to build a tunnel to take the A303 under Stonehenge. Yet it's still in order to build an utterly useless (even if pretty - we'll see) millennium dome at Greenwich, London, at a cost of some £30 million. Just as it's apparently feasible to spend £50 million building a tunnel under Park Lane (also London). Here is a useful suggestion. Scrap the Greenwich dome and build the Stonehenge tunnel instead. But don't call it a tunnel: call it the Salisbury Plain Millennium Linear Underground Dome. That should keep the Treasury happy.

Paying up for trauma

HEAD TO HEAD

Let's all sue for compensation. Hillsborough police did, even a bullied schoolboy did, so why shouldn't we all? Ian Walker believes it's our right, but fellow lawyer Martin Mears says our passion for suing has gone too far

Dear Martin,

IT COMES as a complete mystery to me why people are getting so exercised about the outcome of recent compensation cases reported in the media. It is somehow being seen as "creeping Americanisation" when, for example, police officers, whom I represented, are awarded damages for appalling psychological injury following the Hillsborough disaster where a child who was bullied mercilessly at school was awarded damages against the local education authority for failing properly to defend his rights and when the rugby player successfully sued the referee for failing properly to control a match in which he was catastrophically injured.

and would be a charter for the negligent and the wicked to injure their fellows at will. Through conditional fees and legal aid the legal profession now offers unprecedented access to justice. Society has changed and people are less willing to accept personal injury visited on them by others as "just one of those things", and demand that the negligent should be made to answer. This is a very positive thing for society. The more individuals are prepared to enforce their rights the greater is the chance that the negligent employer will decide they have to treat safety issues seriously. The more claims that are brought against government agencies, the more likely those agencies will strive to act properly and decently. A great American lawyer once said he would rather be at the top of the cliff building a fence than waiting at the bottom with an ambulance. Compensation claims really do work in improving safety standards in society and are in any event one of the most effective ways in which the rights



of the individual can be seen to be protected and upheld. Yours sincerely, Ian J Walker Vice-president, Personal Injury Lawyers

Dear Ian,

I'M AFRAID your rhetoric rather gives the game away. "Appalling psychological injury" etc. It is that of the jury advocates with a poor case. "Creeping Americanisation", alas, is a reality. It means that we are moving towards a culture where there is no such thing as an unfortunate mishap, where there is always someone to blame for life's knocks, where every mistake is to be counted as culpable negligence.

inevitably ensure that the excesses of the US system will not reach these shores. I do hope that you will take the greatest care on any future cliff walks. The National Trust does have a duty to take reasonable care of you, and frankly ought to get sued if it allows you to fall to your doom over a dangerous cliff! Yours sincerely, Ian Walker

Dear Martin,

THANK YOU for your letter. I am not entirely sure what conclusion you reached, but I assume that you feel no need to show that someone can be blamed for this. Until recently the English courts took a robust attitude. Rugby was assumed to be a rough game in which the participants accepted the risk of injury. No one thought of suing the referee. The idea that rescue workers should complain about "traumas" to be expected from the very nature of their work would have been thought absurd.

No creeping Americanisation? Haven't we already reached the point where almost every mishap or disappointment is assumed to create "stress" with the necessity for the involvement of a "stress counsellor"? You acknowledge that the Amer-

ican system has "excesses". It would be interesting to know what you regard as an excess, since the arguments of American personal injury lawyers in defence of their racket are exactly the same as your own. If I fall over a cliff I shall regard it as my own silly fault! Yours sincerely, Martin Mears

Dear Martin,

THE POLICE officers who attended the scene of the appalling massacre at Hillsborough will be entitled to claim compensation only if they can show that someone (apart from the murderer) was negligent in allowing the tragedy to occur, and that they could be regarded as "rescuers" within the meaning of the law. They will not be entitled to claim damages simply because they have had to witness the aftermath of the carnage.

The Hillsborough cases have not shared their position at all. The better question is: if the police officers do have a valid claim, why will the law deal less well with the partners of those who died, as happened at Hillsborough?

You confuse impassioned argument with rhetoric. I do not argue that any and every mishap should result in damages. What I do say, having witnessed the huge personal tragedy (oops - there I go again) caused by negligent injury is that these claims form a vital part in the fabric of a caring society. Yours sincerely, Ian Walker

Dear Ian,

I ASKED where decisions of the Hillsborough type were leading. Your reply provides the answer: professional rescuers can claim damages from their employer (in effect the taxpayer) for dealing with the very misadventures they are paid to confront, while the parents, family and friends of those actually killed or injured are entitled to nothing, or minimal levels of compensation.

Judges faced by the consequences of a terrible accident are naturally tempted to stretch the law and provide a remedy. But this, as I keep saying, takes us down the American path. A doctor makes a misdiagnosis and a routine eye test. A parent whose child falls off a local authority swing automatically consults lawyers. If I fall off a cliff it must be the National Trust's fault.

And, of course, few injuries are as catastrophic as your rabble-rousing language might suggest. "Stress" claims already provide rich pickings for those who have an interest in encouraging them. You say the Hillsborough rescue workers should be compensated. But traumatic motorway accidents are commonplace. Should ambulance crews be able to sue the drivers involved? What about passing motorists who might also be traumatised? Should they not have a remedy? And do not the families of those traumatised suffer? Why should they not claim as well?

"Impassioned argument"? Why not try clear thinking? Yours sincerely, Martin Mears

LIFE'S A LOTTERY. When you buy a lottery ticket, you've a one in 14 million chance of winning the jackpot. The chances that you may experience some form of rheumatic disease are rather greater. The Arthritis and Rheumatism Council is the only major UK charity financing medical research into rheumatism and rheumatic diseases at most university hospitals and medical schools in the UK. Unlike the lottery, successful research programmes aren't dependent on chance. We need your help to increase our odds of finding a cure for these destructive diseases.

Doonesbury



Retirement. After a while, tax arguments, Labour's agenda for social and economic advancement is outlined by Tony Blair. WE CAN'T, it appears, find \$300 million to build a tunnel to take the A303 under Stonehenge. Yet it's still in order to build an utterly useless (even if pretty - we'll see) millennium dome at Greenwich, London, at a cost of some £30 million. Just as it's apparently feasible to spend £50 million building a tunnel under Park Lane (also London). Here is a useful suggestion. Scrap the Greenwich dome and build the Stonehenge tunnel instead. But don't call it a tunnel: call it the Salisbury Plain Millennium Linear Underground Dome. That should keep the Treasury happy.

After a week of tax arguments, Labour's agenda for social and economic advancement is outlined by Tony Blair



NO ONE can now doubt that the general election campaign is effectively under way. Having tried and failed to fight on the issue of the moral fabric of society, the Conservatives this week joined battle on the economy by alleging that a Labour government would result in massive hikes in taxation as a result of profligate spending.

The task for Labour between now and the election is not just to destroy that argument point by point but to put forward its own coherent economic case, showing how the Tories have failed and how Labour can build lasting prosperity.

The reaction to the launch of the Conservative Party's invented claims about Labour's tax and spending plans has ranged from the honesty of one Conservative spokesman who admitted that the operation did not work "actually", to the less polite derision from objective commentators.

This failure to convince is the result of four factors. First, Labour has changed the argument on taxation. We have rejected the idea that higher tax is an end in itself, but recognise that tax cannot be divorced from the state of the economy. High tax is not a virtuous symbol of the Left and we have rejected the intellectually lazy idea that whatever the levels of tax spend and borrowing under the Tories, they must automatically be higher under Labour.

Of course, Labour would like to give a higher priority to education and our health service. But there are many areas we would like to spend less on — health bureaucrats, the costs of unemployment and crime.

Second, as a result of our new

approach we have not made commitments to greater spending years before we are in a position to assess what the country can afford. In 1992 Labour was saddled with spending commitments made four years before the election. People were left not grateful for the benefit largesse that we promised to distribute, but scared about how we would pay for it. This time around, where we have made spending commitments we have shown exactly how they can be funded.

Third, we are more determined to counter every Tory lie, quickly and effectively. In the past we wrongly assumed that figures that obviously lacked any credibility would have no public impact, even if left unchallenged. This time we are taking no such chances. Each of the 66 claims of extra unfunded spending was destroyed by 3pm on the day they were made.

Fourth, and the overwhelming reason why the Conservative attack is less likely to hit home is the Tories' own credibility on taxation. Whatever the Chancellor does on Tuesday, people will be paying more tax at the time of the 1997 general election than in 1992. The Tories have put up taxes 22 times, at a cost to the typical family of £2,000 by the time of the next election. This has not been to fund generosity to those most in need; government spending is now skewed towards picking up the costs of economic failure, rather than investing for the future.

Our case is that neither state control nor unbridled laissez-faire can deliver economic success today. There are new dividing lines in the debate: between Labour which sees the route to competitiveness as investment in skills and technology, and the Conservatives

who are pursuing a doomed attempt to compete on the basis of a low-wage, low-skill economy.

Between Labour which sees fiscal prudence and stability as a necessary precondition for growth, and the Conservatives who have pursued a policy of boom and bust over the last 17 years.

Between Labour which sees an economic imperative in fighting growing inequality, and the Conservatives who do not.

Between Labour which sees positive engagement in Europe as fundamental to our economic success, and the Conservatives who talk more and more of withdrawal.

It was for a long time popular perception that Labour was the party of social policy, and the Conservatives the party of economic policy. In part the Left encouraged this view. Tony Crosland's *The Future of Socialism* argued that rapid economic growth and changes in the distribution of economic power meant that socialists should focus on distribution of the cake, not expansion of its size.

THIS separation of economic and social policy is a dangerous fallacy. It is not just that our social aims depend on the success of an economic policy designed to benefit the many and not just the few, but also that the Conservatives have shown themselves to be monumentally incompetent and unjust in their management of the economy.

Seventeen years of Conservative government have left us ill-equipped for a new economic world of intense global competition. We are 42nd in the world skills league. We are 11th out of 15 for inflation, 11th out of 15 for interest rates which are now going up, 11th out of

15 for job creation, and our annual growth rate since 1979 has been the slowest of any major European country.

Our tests for Tuesday's budget are these:

- We cannot compromise the need for macroeconomic stability. Low inflation and low interest rates combine to encourage investment that is the only route to lasting prosperity, and they require prudent management of public finances. We are committed to the "golden rule" — borrowing only to invest over the cycle.
- We must equip ourselves for the future by investing in the things that power growth — skills, technology, infrastructure, research — either by government action directly, through our proposed Individual Learning Accounts, or by using public-private partnerships to support investment.
- We must tackle inequality which is itself a major cause of slow growth. Moving people from welfare to work is an economic as well as a social priority. We have pledged to use the proceeds of a windfall levy on the excess profits of the privatised utilities to get 250,000 young people back to work. Combined with a national minimum wage, designed to make work pay, and our long-term tax objective of a new lower starting rate of tax of 15p or 10p (to replace the Tories' objective of abolishing capital gains and inheritance tax at a cost of £4.6 billion), we can start to tackle the poverty traps the Tories have created.
- Finally, we want to see a new drive for fairness in government policy. If money is available for tax cuts, let it be used for the 15 or 10p rate, or to cut VAT on fuel. VAT was doubled in 1979 and extended

to fuel at 17.5 per cent (until Labour won a vote to cut it in 1984). If the Tories do not cut VAT on fuel to 5 per cent, that policy will be in our election manifesto.

Labour's economic strategy is designed to do what is right for the country if we win power. But it is also designed to avoid the political mistakes that will be ruthlessly exploited if we make them.

Some people say that our approach is timid. I ask them: surely you cannot believe the Tories are spending £30 billion in the way it should be spent. We have always said that after the Tories' last budget, and in time for the election, we will set out any tax plans that we have.

The first rule of politics should be to promise only what you can deliver. We are committed to the minimum wage, constitutional reform (including House of Lords reform), replacement of the nursery voucher programme, supporting Europe and the social chapter, new targets for environmental improvement, replacement of the internal market in the NHS, crime prevention measures supported this week by the Audit Commission, and a housing programme led by the phased release of capital receipts. Is that not a vision worth fighting for? And does it not offer a new course for British politics?

Everything suggests that these are the dying days of a bankrupt regime. For more than a year, the whole of government business has been lying traps for Labour. They have nothing to say on the big issues that face us. Yet they are a formidable fighting machine. Our response has to be canny as well as principled, effective as well as strikingly presented. That is what it will be.



Then and now... Terry Anderson in the ruins of Sabra-Chatila Palestinian refugee camp in southern Beirut, destroyed by Israeli air strikes in 1982, and, below, as he was in 1987 in a picture released by his captors

Return to the lion's den



How does it feel to confront the horror of places where you were held hostage for 2,454 days? Ian Black reports as Terry Anderson goes back to Beirut

TERRY Anderson has filled out since his hostage days. He has eaten well, evidently too well, to make up for nearly seven lost years at the pleasure of his Lebanese captors. "I am always struggling with my weight," he admits ruefully. "But otherwise I'm okay."

Squeezed into a smart two-piece suit, he looks fine and sounds confident, even polished, stopping over in London with the final cut of the film he has made to chase out the last of his demons. Going out on CNN next month, the fifth anniversary of his release, he looks at a Lebanon recovering from its nightmare years, as Anderson is from his own, in that fractured, dangerous land. "The lions are all tamed," he quips. "There are a few lurking around in the bushes, but nothing to worry about. They have other targets these days."

Anderson's long ordeal began on March 16, 1985, when gunmen bundled him into a car as he returned to his Beirut apartment after an early morning game of tennis. The Associated Press bureau chief, ex-marine and Vietnam vet was one of the first civilian victims of the vicious war between the West and Lebanon's fundamentalist Shi'ite Muslims — Hizbullah, Islamic Jihad, or whatever name they were using. And he was the last of the western hostages to be freed, in Damascus on December 4, 1991.

He talks matter-of-factly about the intervening 2,454 days — being beaten, blindfolded, chained like a dog and moved around from cellar to hovel, often muzzified in masking tape by the guards he still cannot quite bring himself to hate.

Going back now, Anderson explains, without any of the psycho-babble you might expect from someone coming to terms with

such a trauma, was the final test for him and Madeleine, the Lebanese wife who bore their daughter three months after he was kidnapped (he did not meet his child until she was six).

"In the past five years we've pretty well dealt with everything we had to deal with. But there was still this thing. And Lebanon is a part of my life. It's my wife's family, my daughter's heritage. So now I've gone back the block is gone, I can go back any time I want. It's not a problem any more. And you know, you always have to test things. What would it feel like talking to Hizbullah? I didn't know, I wanted to find out. And I did. And it was okay."

It was frightening though. Anderson had his first back-in-prison nightmare for ages a week before leaving for Beirut, but he knew what he wanted to do and it did not include confronting his tormentors directly: two years earlier he had accompanied a Vietnam veteran, a POW for six-and-a-half years, back to the infamous "Hanoi Hilton".

After that he wasn't interested in old prison cells and interviewing guards, though he could identify most of the places where he was held and he lingered outside the sinister Sheikh Abdullah barracks in Basalbek, then Hizbullah's headquarters and his home for two long winters.

He also knew the identities of some of those responsible — their leader, Imad Mughniyeh, still moves between Iran and Lebanon, a wanted and dangerous man — though he talks of his guards without rancour: "They were peculiar people... they wanted to be liked. Every time something bad would happen, they'd give somebody a beating, there'd be some punishment... you could count on it. Later they'd be down with a plate of cookies or a Coke."

Yet he was curious and coura-

geous enough to want to interview Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbullah's spiritual leader and the man whose predecessors have been variously targeted by the CIA, blown up, or kidnapped by the Israelis. Nasrallah was polite but impassive, refusing to condemn hostage-taking or express even a smidgeon of regret. Anderson, ever the professional journalist, smiles as he talks to the cleric on camera, but admits to feeling uneasy.

"He hasn't changed his mind; tactics perhaps, but not his opinions. It was a little bit uncomfortable because I don't agree with these people and I think that, should the circumstances arise, they're quite capable of doing it again. I don't think they will, because it's not useful to them any more. It was a seven-year-long lesson for everybody. This kind of thing doesn't work. Nobody gains from it, not even the kidnapers."

“L IKE everybody else in Lebanon they have stopped killing each other... that's a major step forward. But in some ways they haven't changed at all. It's that soft, smiling rigidity. They're not about. They're nice, gentle, and just as hard as a rock. It was a little strange, but that's okay. It was a long time ago."

Other hostages — Brian Keenan and Tom Sutherland in particular — have paid tribute to Anderson's strength: he was the hard-nosed newsman who inspired them, through prayer and sheer bloody-minded grit, to get through the endless days — though Keenan graphically describes the American once banging his head despairingly against a wall until it bled. And Anderson himself tells without emotion of shackling his

own leg irons, left undone by a careless guard, to avoid an otherwise inevitable beating.

That strength is impressively, movingly evident now in his ability to put it all behind him at the same time as acknowledging how the experience has become part of his life. It reminded me of the story that Eric Lomax tells in his best-selling book *The Railway Man*, a painful journey of reconciliation and forgiveness for the Japanese who imprisoned and tortured him on the death railway of Burma in the second world war, though it took Lomax — in an age when counselling was unheard of and POWs were deemed to have shirked the "real" action — most of the rest of his life to come to terms with what had happened.

Anderson was living with Madeleine and separated from his first wife and child when he was kidnapped, but family plays a central role in his post-hostage fortune. And he is busy, teaching journalism at Columbia University and active in the Vietnam Children's Fund, the Interfaith Alliance (a Christian group devoted to combating the religious right) and the Committee to Protect Journalists.

He has quit AP and no longer files copy daily, but still likes to tell a story. He lectures often to Americans who find the labyrinthine ways of the Middle East hard to negotiate and are confused by the duplicity of a government that sent a gun-ho marine lieutenant-colonel — Oliver North — to negotiate with what Anderson calls "rug merchants in Tehran" and then ensured Terry Waite in Mughniyeh's net. Anderson wants to improve the image of a land of bombings, fanaticism and brutality by showing the generosity, the *joie de vivre* and the beautiful women and landscapes that Lebanon boasts.

Yet the country of his ordeal

has not yet reached its happy end: the Palestinians at the centre of so many of his past travails are still suffering. His visit to Gaza, where a hundred covering refugees died in last April's Israeli offensive, was a bloody reminder that not all Lebanon's tragedies are of its own making. The "other targets" Anderson speaks of in his den of lions are down south these days.

Five years on, getting together with fellow members of the ex-hostages club still plays a part in his life, though he gives the impression that it may not continue that way. Waite, the least popular of them, by most accounts, "gave me the worst pub dinner I've ever had in my life," Anderson laughs. "We never talk about those days other than to joke about them. But we know each other very well. And we actually do like each other" — a pause — "mostly."

One lingering worry is what

will happen if the kidnapers are ever brought to justice. "Should any of these gentlemen be arrested and brought to court I would, of course, be asked to testify along with other hostages. I probably would. I don't believe that the requirement laid on me to forgive my enemies means they should not be punished for what they did. But it's not anything I think about or would wish to be involved in at this point. I have a life."

It is apparently a happy and balanced one, proving that living well is the best revenge. "You begin to move on," Anderson says. "I'm still 'the former hostage' in the United States, and that's okay. I don't mind that. But I'm beginning to do other things. People are beginning to recognise that. One of these days that's going to be in the second graph, not the first."

The Guardian interview

Eric Ambler
at the National Film Theatre
Sunday November 24 2.30pm

Eric Ambler became famous for his novels between 1935 and 1940. After working in Hollywood he decided to leave the film world and return to Europe to resume writing. He will be talking about his career with *The Observer's* Philip French

Bob Rafelson
at the National Film Theatre
Sunday November 24 2.00pm

Having created *The Monkees'* Film Head in 1968, Bob Rafelson went on to make *Five Easy Pieces* and *The King of Marvin Gardens* with Jack Nicholson. Rafelson will be in discussion with Derek Malcolm about his latest film *Blood and Wine*.

The Guardian has five pairs of tickets to give away to each interview for the first readers to show this offer at the NFT Box Office, South Bank, London SE1 from 10.30am today and the Booth on the Square, Leicester Square from midday.

arts

Welcome to planet Simpson

Stuart Jeffries celebrates the arrival on British terrestrial television of an ugly, yellow, dysfunctional American family

ARGUABLY, the last thing the BBC should broadcast is The Simpsons. It's not just because the show hilariously laughs at the British, although that's annoying enough: when the show's dentist wants to scare kids into scrupulous dental care, he shows them pictures of the Royal Family with diseased teeth...



The world according to Bart

'Eat My Shorts' is Bart Simpson's most famous retort, a 'Swivel On This' for 10-year-olds, if you will, while 'I'm Bart Simpson. Who the Hell are you?' is written on one of his T-shirts. These catchphrases capture the essence of the character whose name, as even the most Simpsonian underachiever will have recognised, is an anagram of Bart.

'Lunch time' is his favourite subject, and 'Acting immature' is his favourite hobby. For example... 'Woolool All right! School is cancelled! Noiseland Video Arcade here I come.' Bart also loves to make hoax phone calls to the drunks at Moe's Tavern, such as... 'Anyone seen Mike Rotch?' These hoaxes, like the opening sequence, supply a running gag for the show. Bart's other phone hoaxes include... 'Hugh Jass?' 'Mugginkiss?'

Recently, a book entitled The Simpsons Comic Extravaganza published Bart's Bottom 40 pet hates. Here are some of the lowlights: Vegetables that don't fly well off your spoon. Having nightmares that I'm a chip off the old block. Parents who have signatures that are really hard to forge. Cartoons with no fun violence and pain. The difficulty of loading water balloons with maple syrup. Cartoons with redeeming social messages.

out of fear of not being loved. 'I'm not popular enough to be different,' he says in an uncharacteristic burst of self-understanding. Or he advises Bart: 'Never say anything unless you're sure everyone else feels exactly the same way.' And so, like Roseanne, there is a double-edged celebration of blue collar US culture. Kwik-E-Mart, Monster Truck Racials and doughnut concessions jostle for attention, but in Springfield there is a total absence of early music festivals and not one decent German literature club. It's the flip side of the American Dream, about a society that has stopped dreaming, and instead takes succour in alcohol-fueled conformism or by wallowing in failure in a way alien to Hancock, Fawcett or Del Boy. Their feelings of shame, embarrassment or doom come from a culture ill-at-ease with itself; the Simpsons are rarely so insecure. 'Underachiever and proud of it,' was Bart's T-shirt slogan, and the shirt sold more than a million a week to US schoolkids at the end of the eighties. State schools banned it, but the slogan expressed a culture of cool anomie. Cool? Let's put it this way: Bart's first words were 'Ay caramba' when he was punished at school by having to write lines on

the class blackboard: 'I will not yell!' 'Treat' in a crowded classroom is the home of irony and the States devoid of subtle wit. Writing in the Guardian recently, Elaine Showalter cited The Simpsons, along with Seinfeld and The Larry Sanders Show, as examples to demonstrate that the latter point is false, but so is the former, particularly when British sitcom humour has become remarkably puerile. Irony and wit may be alive and well elsewhere in British culture (probably in Chris Morris's banned satirical show Brass Eye, though we may never know for sure), but they are presently absent without leave from our sitcoms. The chief expressions of comic wit and irony will doubtless be made next week when the

award is given for the best ITV sitcom, a programme that is, one can safely predict, barely distinguishable in quality from the worst. One of the main virtues of The Simpsons, which makes the show singular among Murdoch products, is its subversiveness. The fact that the show is a cartoon helps in this. The Simpsons first appeared in 1987 on The Tracey Ullman Show as a 'bumper' (a 15-second segment before a commercial break). This was a satirical skit during a show for adults, and creator Matt Groening maintained that the show, which premiered as a half-hour programme in January 1990, is still for adults. But this is not wholly convincing because TV cartoons have always been ostensibly targeted at children. The Simpsons can readily be taken as a children's show, yet one that deals with such purportedly adult issues as government, conjugal infidelity, therapy ('I have some issues to do with my beloved,' another I mean mother,' says Bart's school principal when spotted in the shrink's waiting room). It's here that the subversiveness is most controversial: some groups of American parents are uneasy about their children's exposure to

such issues, and also about the cult of Bart. The smug, half-mast, forever frozen as a 10-year-old brat with a serrated hairline to match his slyly attitude to authority is not exactly a proper role model for kids to emulate. His image has been banned for this reason from many schools — ludicrously given its ubiquity elsewhere. Groening reveals in The Simpsons' controversial status: 'If we can make a cartoon that makes one part of the audience laugh and just enrages another part of the audience that's just the best feeling in the world.' Much American comedy, though verbally biting, is timid in what it will represent and criticise. The dysfunctional alcoholics of Cheers were never depicted as drunk, yet Homer and the other habits of Moe's Tavern are virtually always comically drunk and stupid. The contained smoker is also excluded from sanitised American programming, and yet barely an episode goes by without Marge Simpson's husky-voiced sisters sucking noisily on twin king-sized. You will rarely see a parent shaking his body in the Simpson's this image threat in the Simpson's. The image of bad parenting is so regularly deployed that it has become a T-shirt illustration. You won't often see a television character glowing green from radiation poisoning, yet Homer sometimes does. In a television culture that privileges the beautiful and the healthy, The Simpsons strikes a blow for the ugly and the burger-obsessed. The characters may be two-dimensional, but they are more rounded, more real than many in American television. The main reason for watching The Simpsons, though, is that it is such a pleasure. Even at the level of animation, for which it has been unfavourably compared to the sophisticated graphic artistry of Ren and Stimpy or Two Bad Dogs, the show is deceptively rich. Not just in the hilariously ultra-violent pastiches of Tom and Jerry, called 'Fry and Scratchy' the way that so obsesses Bart and Lisa. The Simpsons family may look like yellow freaks with four fingers (it was a particular delight when Marge recently counted to five and had to transfer to a second hand towards the end) and preposterous overbites, but they have a remarkable amount of cartoon heritage written into their features. Homer's brown five o'clock shadow echoes the depiction of lower-class types from the Flintstones to the Ant Hill Mob. The drawing eschews the thin-lined figures of Hanna-Barbera's proto-dysfunctional teen, Watt Till Your Father Gets Home, preferring more readily identifiable caricatures which are nonetheless sufficiently schematic not to have the poncey flash of say Disney's manager or Roger Rabbit. Again, the makers of The Simpsons delight themselves and us in pastiching fashionable developments in animation. In an episode called 'Homer's Harem' was transformed into a computer-generated figure in a Toy Story 2 dimensions became three, and then the animators pulled off the coup de grace, grafting this on to a film of people walking down a street. Suddenly Homer was walking down Main Street USA. She same size as the human who looked at him amazed. It was, surely one of the most uncanny moments in animation history. Like the best American imports, it is almost profligate with its entertainment — visual jokes abound behind the action, as do neat film references, some of which you won't get the first time around. There's an assumption among the makers that some viewers will tape the show, play it back and dally with the pause button. There's a spirit of generosity towards the viewer (all but absent from British-made programming) in all this that comes from being made by animators who love television, were raised on it and appreciate its potential. This is one of the reasons why it is worth viewers catching up with the Simpsons on terrestrial TV more than half a decade after it was first fashionable. It is a show truly and unashamedly of the television age. The makers embrace television figuratively, using the medium to produce substantial content. Homer embraces the TV literally, seeing in its resources an otherwise disappointing life. His kids do the same, regarding it as more stable and nurturing than their parents. 'Bart, Lisa? Are you hugging the television again?' asks Homer. Of course they are. It's their only hope in a grisly world. There's No Disgrace Like Home in on BBC1 today at 5.30pm; a documentary, The Simpsons Have Landed, will be shown on Sunday at 3.15pm.

SHOOTING STARS

RIISING: JOHN FREDERIC LEWIS



Up... Gainsborough? Yup, we know him. Constable? Mmm-hmm. But Victorian artist John Frederic Lewis? They love him in the Middle East — he liked to dress in Arab robes — but he's been overshadowed over here by the heights to which Lewis's work will climb when his Lium Auratum sells for £27,500 at Christie's. And away... This week, that same pairing has been exchanged for a watery £26,500 at Sotheby's, a record for a watercolour. Did a credit-card-toting shopper get confused in search of the 'John Lewis sale'?

FALLING: TIM RICE



Going... Way way back many centuries ago/ not long after the bible began, Tim Rice and his buddy Andy are coolfish. They enjoy musical triumph (Joseph) after musical triumph (Evita). Going... But the golden boys drift apart. And Tim is forced to write — for Disney! A Whole New World by Aladdin and Jasmine tops the charts, but inside, Tim is weeping. Gone... This week, his first ever smash returned to London. But critics united in the conviction that Tim's lyrics no longer cut the mustard. There is something curiously unconvincing about the idea that Jesus Christ is a Superstar at all. As for him being 'cool about his fate'...

So the BBC is to axe its 60-year-old costume department. Fashion historian Colin McDowell cries foul

Dress to kill

Provocations

MEN BEHAVING badly is nothing new at the BBC. The latest example is the announcement last week that the costume department is to close with the loss of 117 jobs. Since 1994, it has made losses totalling £10 million. This is clearly a problem that needs to be addressed, but surely it would have been more sensible not to lose the expertise and knowledge gained by 60 years of experience but to have realised the budget and instituted more stringent controls. The decision to liquidate the department seems especially foolish when it is known that much of the success of BBC drama in the world market is due to the quality of its sets and costumes. Compare Elizabeth R or I Claudius with Hollywood productions set in the same periods and it is apparent

what will be lost — not just authenticity and integrity but the creative humility that engenders them. And what is to take the costume department's place? Design teams headed by consultants — by the nature of their training, people geared to quick turnover and slick solutions. In contrast, good costume designer thinks little of his ego and much of his brief. He spends time in libraries, visits costume museums and steps himself in plot and characters as well as social period before he even picks up a pencil. This time to research is simply not allowed for in a commercial design situation. Of course, there are good designers on the freelance market. Opera, ballet and the theatre would be seriously weakened without them. But the role they play is subtly different from that required of the BBC design team. Ballet, opera and theatre productions, it can be argued, are a privilege for the few,

MISTRESS WESTWOOD RAN IT UP FOR ME.



who frequently bring their own background knowledge to an interpretation of the dress on the stage, whereas television drama is aimed at a wider and less culturally complete audience. And, television being a medium of record, authenticity is a vital part of the interpretation of any work of literature on the box. Actors spend hours 'feeling' a character in rehearsal — through a turn of the head to the way in which an item of clothing is worn. One of the blots on the success of Pride and Prejudice was Darcy's plunge into the pool. He didn't do it in Jane Austen and he wouldn't have done it in real life. It

was a gratuitous modern addition which had only one purpose — to let the millions of viewers enjoy seeing his shirt stick to his body. The moment was false, but the shirt — in cut, colour and bulk — was not. It is this integrity that the BBC is putting at risk. Freelance designers are like all others who live by their wits. Knowing that they are only as good as their last production and only likely to be invited back if they cut corners in order to remain within budget, they must jettison the minutiae of the perfectionist. Approximation supplants precision. There is a further danger, already apparent in much that appears in the West End theatre. Flashiness becomes more highly valued than authenticity and that leads to a mass-produced perfection of any work of literature on the box. Actors spend hours 'feeling' a character in rehearsal — through a turn of the head to the way in which an item of clothing is worn. One of the blots on the success of Pride and Prejudice was Darcy's plunge into the pool. He didn't do it in Jane Austen and he wouldn't have done it in real life. It

plummet. There are no curtains to raise on TV. It is not the designer's job to create tableaux vivants to make the audience gasp and applaud. TV is too realistic a medium for that. What is required is the feeling of 'rightness', and that can best be achieved by design simplicity. What can the future hold for classic costume? The grandeur of the costume is allowed to become a vying point? Has French theatre ever recovered from the ostentation of display which took hold in the fin de siècle and frequently ruptured the authenticity of the action? What is the logical conclusion to bringing in outside designers? Are we on the brink of the celebrity designer in classic costume? Imagine Emma dressed by Versace, or Madame Bovary costumed by Lacroix. How do you fancy Henry James seen through the eyes of Ralph Lauren or Tennessee Williams clothed by Calvin Klein? Costume drama is starting into the void. If the BBC design unit cannot be reinstated, at least someone at Television Centre should be laying down some pretty stringent guidelines before the 'designer by...' bonanza gets under way.

Guardian Christmas Crackers Ex Libris A game for 4 to 8 players Produced in association with the British Library and the Bodleian Library this enormously enjoyable game will test your literary acumen and challenge your writing skills. A player picks a card on which is printed the title, author and plot summary of a novel and reads it out. Players then have to write a plausible opening line to the work. All entries and the correct answer are read out. The winner is the one who has most votes cast for their entry. A great Christmas present. £ 10.95 +99p p&p To order Ex Libris call free on 0500 600 102 quoting ref GD101. Alternatively please send / fax this coupon to our address below. I enclose a cheque / PO made payable to Guardian Interactive for £... Please debit my Access / Visa / Delta / Mastercard / Switch Card No... Mr Mrs Miss Address Postcode Telephone Send to Guardian Interactive, 250 Western Avenue, London W3 6ZG, UK. Offer UK Only Tel: +44 181 234 2343 outside UK Fax: 0181 324 2678 E-Mail: gd@mail.bogno.co.uk Please do not send any further mailings from Guardian Interactive unless you specifically request them.

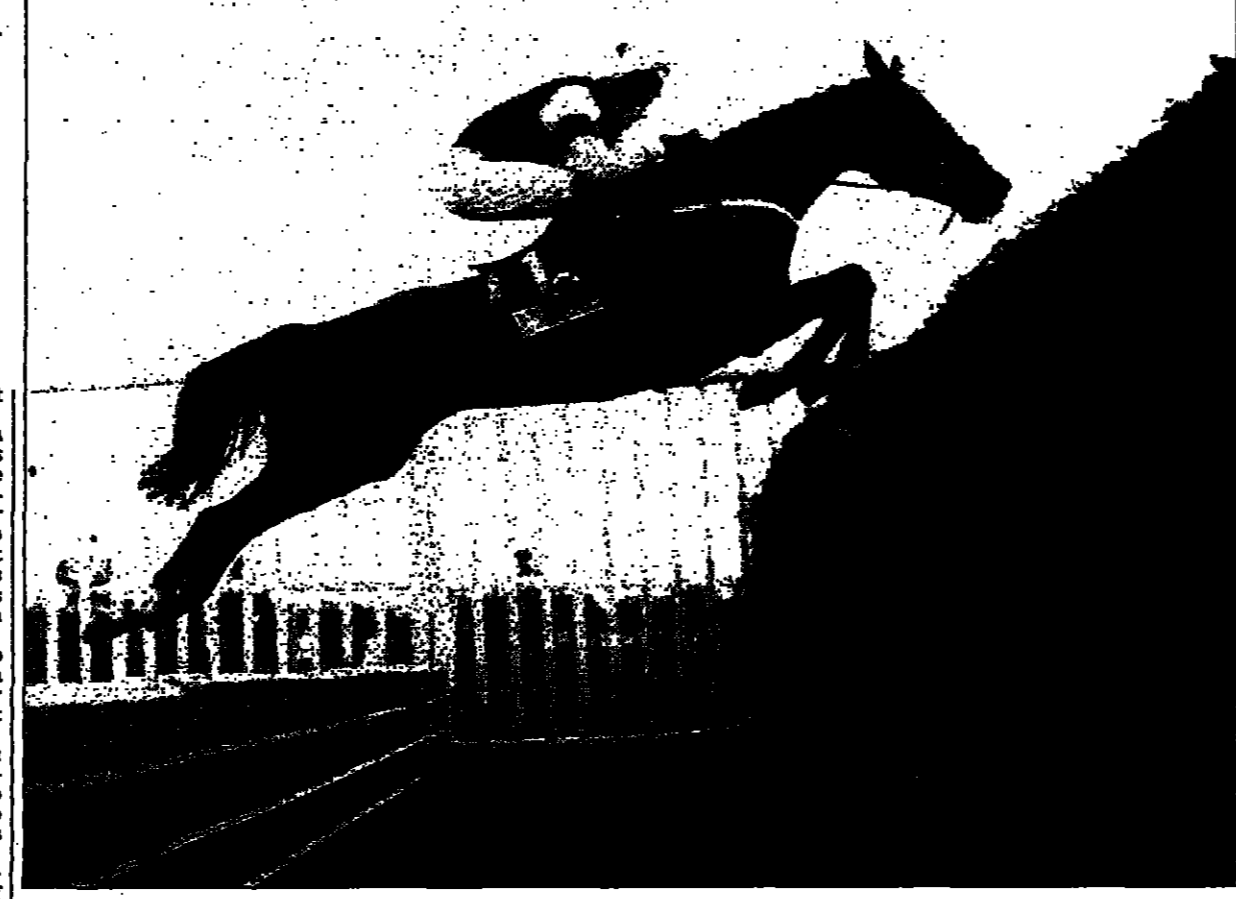
The rash in crash This mighty

سنة من الاجل

Racing

Hustler to home in at Aintree

Chris Hawkes
FIRM ground at Ascot declaimed yesterday's fields and has again caused a disappointing turnout today, although ten stand their ground in the day's main event, the First National Bank Gold Cup.



Spring time... Young Hustler shows the style that won him last year's Bechers Home Chase

Impressively over Straight Talk three weeks ago. Spectacle of the afternoon will be the Crowther Homes Bechers Chase over the Grand National fences at Aintree in which Young Hustler (2.10) attempts to follow up last year's success.

course, and seems to have taken to the fencing, scoring by a distance at Market Rasen last time. Only six go to post for the Stanley Leisure Handicap Hurdle, but it still looks a competitive affair.

Ascot with TV form

- 12.45 Sherra Bay (sh)
1.20 Go Ballistic
1.50 Squaire's Occasion

12.45 HOLLOWAYS GATE NOVICE HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 ABOUT A BUNCH (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 PP. BLAIR AND ROYAL (ST) V Score 4-1-0

BBC-1

- 1 215-3 KING LUCIFER (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 215-4 GO BALLISTIC (ST) (10) D. J. O'Brien
3 215-5 SQUAIRE'S OCCASION (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 1.55 ANNEVILLE JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE 5yo 11yo (25,145)
1 151 CHERRY BLOSSOM (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 1114 DOCTOR GREEN (14) (10) P. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 2.30 FIRST NATIONAL BANK GOLD CUP CHASE (handicap) 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 171-5 SERRIN LAD (ST) (10) M. J. O'Brien
2 171-6 SERRIN LAD (ST) (10) M. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.05 HURRY PANEY NOVICE CHASE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 171-5 SERRIN LAD (ST) (10) M. J. O'Brien
2 171-6 SERRIN LAD (ST) (10) M. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.40 LOW GATE HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 222-3 OCEAN BAY (17) (10) N. J. O'Brien
2 222-4 OCEAN BAY (17) (10) N. J. O'Brien

Results

Table with columns for race name, horse name, jockey, and time. Includes Aintree, Ascot, and Market Rasen results.

Aintree with TV form

- 1.05 Sherry Dashing
1.20 Sherry Dashing
1.30 Young Hustler (comp)

1.05 STANLEY LEISURE HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 115-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 115-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 1.35 STANLEY LEISURE HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 115-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 115-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 2.10 CROWTHER HOMES BECHERS CHASE (handicap) 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 2.45 TOVE COURT JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE 5yo 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.15 TOWN GATE HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.50 LOW GATE HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

Towcester

- 12.30 In Profile
1.00 Wily Star
1.30 Wily Star

12.30 THORNTON COOK HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 201-4 BERRYWOOD HURDLE (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 201-5 BERRYWOOD HURDLE (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 1.00 ANNEVILLE JUVENILE NOVICE HURDLE 5yo 11yo (25,145)
1 151 CHERRY BLOSSOM (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 1114 DOCTOR GREEN (14) (10) P. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 1.30 ALDERTON NOVICE CHASE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 2.05 THORNTON COOK HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 201-4 BERRYWOOD HURDLE (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 201-5 BERRYWOOD HURDLE (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 2.35 NATIONAL LETTERBOX HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.10 WOODS-1 WOODS-1 (11) W. Turner 5-11-0
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.45 PAINSTON HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

Catterick

- 1.10 Cuckoo The Pigeon
1.40 Khammarra Galt
2.10 Jack Doyle

1.10 BATTLEFIELD HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 1.40 BATTLEFIELD HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 2.10 NORTHERN HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 2.40 CALLEWATTS ANNEVILLE NOVICE CHASE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.10 DICK BENTLEY HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.40 WOODS-1 WOODS-1 (11) W. Turner 5-11-0
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

Market Rasen

- 12.10 Serrin Lad
1.40 Serrin Lad
1.50 Serrin Lad

12.10 CROWTHER HOMES BECHERS CHASE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 1.15 BET WITH THE TOTE NOVICE CHASE (handicap) 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 1.50 CLOUTON HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 2.25 CROFTON TRAVEL HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.00 CLOUTON HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

BBC-1

- 3.25 CROFTON TRAVEL HURDLE 5m 11yo (25,145)
1 111-11 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien
2 111-12 SIMPLY BASHFUL (10) (10) D. J. O'Brien

Racing cleared of 'abuse' charges

RACING in Britain has been cleared of charges of widespread abuse and ill treatment of former racehorses. A report presented by the International League for the Protection of Horses to the British Horseracing Board and the Jockey Club concludes there was no substance in allegations of large scale mistreatment which came to prominence in the television programme 'They Shoot Horses, Don't They?'

Asrac, ridden by Seb Sanders and trained by Gay Kelleway, completed a hat-trick in the six-furlong Prix Cessinaux at Evry yesterday, beating Linxois and Rose Bourbon a length and half a length. Bryn Fallings's Carranita (Tim Sprake) was fourth. Mark Johnson's Branston Abby (Michael Roberts) seventh and Rae Guest's My Cadeaux (Dane O'Neill) the rear.

● Binkered for the first time: CATERICK: 2.10 Ernest Aragon; 3.10 Newhall Prince; 2.00 Craigmore Magic. THORNTON: 2.00 MAREKWI; RASEN: 12.40 Chalky Lad; TOWCESTER: 3.10 Alone Home, AINTREE and ASCOT: None.

Soccer

World ban on Blinker stuns Wednesday

Russell Thomas

REGI BLINKER, Sheffield Wednesday's Dutch forward, has been suspended worldwide by Fifa with immediate effect over an alleged double signing and is now ruled out of today's Premiership game against Sunderland.

Wednesday were further angered when the FA immediately called on Fifa to consider lifting the ban until next Friday, only to see that rejected.

Wednesday claim that two months before his move to England Blinker signed a document pledging his intent to sign for the Italian club when his Feyenoord contract expired in summer.

Wednesday's secretary Graham Mackrell said: "The suspension is totally unfair on Sheffield Wednesday... we are totally innocent, as are Feyenoord. This is purely a matter between Regi and Udinese. There is no suggestion we have done anything wrong. We paid a transfer fee for Regi in the proper manner and international clearance was granted."

Tottenham claim they have beaten off several top English — and Continental — clubs in capturing the 20-year-old forward Steffen Iversen from Rosenborg for £2.7 million, a record for a Norwegian player.

The Spurs chairman Alan Sugar flew back from Norway yesterday after all but wrapping up the transfer and later the manager Gerry Francis said: "We've agreed a deal with the club and virtually completed a deal with the player — we just have to dot the i's."

Francis insisted Iversen will join Spurs on December 5, even if Rosenborg overcome the odds the night before they meet Milan to decide who qualifies for the Champions League.

Scottish Coca-Cola Cup final: Rangers v Hearts

Rangers play monopoly

Patrick Glenn

IF HORSES for courses were the only criteria for forecasting tomorrow's Coca-Cola Cup final, Rangers would be a racing certainty to beat Hearts at Celtic Park.

Only two other finals have been played at Parkhead in recent years, the Scottish Cup and League Cup of 1993, and Rangers won both, beating Aberdeen and Hibs.

Likewise, whatever the venue, Rangers virtually own this first major trophy of the Scottish season. With 19 victories from 25 previous appearances in the final, they are by a distance the most consistent competitors in a tournament which began immediately after the last war.

Ally McCoist himself is seeking a ninth winner's medal although he is unlikely to carry off the prize for the top marksman in this season's competition. Jorge Cardete of Celtic, Dean Windass

of Aberdeen and Jim Hamilton of Dundee lead that list on five goals, with the Rangers pair Peter van Vossen (four) and Jorg Albertz (three) seeming to have the best chance of overtaking them.

Van Vossen, however, is unlikely to start. As expected, Brian Laudrup throws off the thigh injury which kept him out of the midweek Champions League win over Grasshopper.

Laudrup and the Swedish defender Joachim Bjorklund both face fitness tests today but Bjorklund appears the bigger doubt. If the Dane plays he would partner McCoist, scorer of both goals against the Swiss, in the front line with Paul Gascoigne restricted to midfield. The England man was suspended for the European match.

Bjorklund's absence would leave Rangers' manager Walter Smith needing to choose between Scott Wilson and Craig Moore in central defence alongside Gough and

Patric Wilson, a 19-year-old whose only first-team matches have been in the Champions League, could complete a remarkable treble by making his third outing in a cup final.

Hearts are rated the 9-2 outsiders and have history against them. Their line-up has changed greatly since their 5-1 hammering in May's Scottish Cup final but the cruel fact is that they have not won a trophy since their 1982 victory in this tournament.

Under the inspired management of Jim Jefferies, however, they are in their second cup final in the space of a few months. Their immediate worry is Dave McPherson, the tall central defender who is battling a knee injury.

McPherson has four winners' medals from his time with Rangers and calls the League Cup "my lucky competition". He and his teammates may need all the good fortune going tomorrow.

Stein returns to Stoke

THE Chelsea striker Mark Stein yesterday rejoined his former club Stoke on a month's loan and the midfielder Gavin Peacock joined Queens Park Rangers for a similar period. Neither has played first-team football at Stamford Bridge this season.

The South Africa-born Stein, now 30, cost Chelsea £1.5 million when he joined them from Stoke in October 1993. His fellow striker John Spencer left Chelsea on Thursday for QPR, who paid a club-record £2.5m for the 26-year-old Scottish international.

Chelsea's manager Ruud Gullit yesterday ruled out an approach for the German goalkeeper Georg Koch, but admitted the player had been watched. Reports had suggested that Chelsea were poised to take the 24-year-old from Fortuna Dusseldorf in a £2m move.

Darren Huckerby yesterday completed his £1m transfer from Newcastle United to Coventry City. The 20-year-old striker signed a 2½-year contract for the Midlands club and is in the squad for today's home game against Aston Villa.

Sunderland yesterday invested the £120,000 they received from the transfer of Brett Angell to Stockport County in helping to pay for the Israeli striker Ronen Harazi, a £400,000 buy from Beitar, who has trained at Roker Park this week.

Angell has spent the past three months on loan at Edgeley Park, scoring eight goals, after being unable to force his way into the Premiership club's line-up.

Jamie Pollock has received international clearance to resume his career in England following his £1.5m move to Bolton from Osasuna.

The Blackpool midfielder Gary Brabin was yesterday fined £500 and banned for two

games by the Football Association for the incident that led to the Brentford captain Jamie Bates being taken to hospital with an oxygen mask over his face.

Brabin clashed with Bates in the Griffin Park tunnel after a 1-1 draw on September 14 and is alleged to have punched him in the back of the neck. Bates was rushed away for treatment but was discharged from hospital shortly afterwards.

Match officials did not see the incident but Brentford's letter to the FA resulted in Brabin being charged with misconduct. Yesterday he was found guilty of ungentlemanly and improper behaviour.

The former Doncaster and Bury midfielder will now miss five games as he starts a three-match suspension on December 3 for accruing 21 disciplinary points. He was ordered to pay the costs of the hearing.

Team sheet

Chelsea v Newcastle: Zola makes his home debut for Chelsea. As does the Norwegian goalkeeper Grogaard. The French winger Ledesma is again after a groin strain. Ochoaiz is named as substitute. England's captain, Shearer, is not in the squad. Leaders following his goal operation and will partner Angell up front.

Coventry v Aston Villa: Coventry include their new £1 million striker from Newcastle, Kevin Phillips. The French winger Ledesma is again after a groin strain. Ochoaiz is named as substitute. England's captain, Shearer, is not in the squad. Leaders following his goal operation and will partner Angell up front.

Leicester v Everton: The Leicester keeper Koller is with the United States and is replaced by Pickett, while Taylor is expected to be the reserve of the Premier League. Parker in midfield. Ferguson is likely to play on the bench for Everton, for whom Kanchelski has recovered from flu.

Liverpool v Wimbledon: The £3 million right half Collymore is expected to get the vote over George as the partner for Fowler in the attack, while which the Premiership record for consecutive appearances, 106, dating back to December 1994, will be sustained with a hat-trick. Liverpool are without a hat-trick since August 1994.

Middlesbrough v Man Utd: Middlesbrough are without their injured captain Pearson and the non-playing midfielder Gary Smith, who is still out of action. Emerson and Gary Neville are expected to partner Phil Neville and Irwin have

been ruled out by injury. Ochoaiz has been recalled from a loan spell at Bury and will partner Ledesma in the attack. Shearer, Taylor, Cook, Clark and Neilson have all been added to the squad.

Southampton v Leeds: Southampton's defender Dyden is struggling to recover from the hamstring injury that ruled him out of the 2-1 defeat at Everton. Morrison is set to deputise for him again. Taylor is expected to be the partner for Fowler in the attack. Shearer is named as substitute. England's captain, Shearer, is not in the squad. Leaders following his goal operation and will partner Angell up front.

Sunderland v Sheff Wed: With Ord suspended and Howey out with a damaged ankle, Sunderland could look to rely on the goal in central defence. Agnew may return to the midfield after recovering from an ankle injury. For Wednesday, Blinker has been suspended by Fifa and will be still out with an achilles tendon injury.

West Ham v Derby: West Ham are hoping to welcome back the injured Marko Radojevic, while Lazio's could also return in place of Romania's Radojevic. Derby means that Potts should keep his place at the heart of the Hammers' defence. Derby could be struggling for goals with a specific to the Croatian defender Stronach, who is still suspended, so Yassir Haneen is in defence.

Tottenham v Arsenal: The England keeper Seaman is out with a rib injury, so Lopez gets his chance in the goal. The Tottenham defence is expected to recover from a groin injury. For in back in contention for Spurs but is unlikely to choose either of the wingers, Anderson and Sutton.

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Deep view... 'The real revelation of a player is not in his social life but how he plays,' says Wenger

Beauty is any kind of goal against Spurs, says Wenger

David Lacey finds Arsenal's new manager approaching his first North London derby tomorrow with a Gallic shrug of confidence

"FOR me, beauty is efficiency," declared Arsene Wenger, Arsenal's recently appointed manager, as he approached his first North London derby. That being so, it was surprising that George Graham's side never won the Miss World contest.

Wenger took over a winning Arsenal side six weeks ago and so far has seen them lose only once in seven games, 1-0 at Manchester United last Saturday. He arrived aware of the negative record for Arsenal's behaviour off the field and the growing criticism that in certain areas, especially defence, the team was growing old together.

None of this, not even the fact that two of his key players, the captain Tony Adams and Paul Merson, are both confirmed alcoholics, appears to have disturbed Wenger. The Arsenal he talked about yesterday could have been playing in the Ivy League.

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Results

Rugby Union: World Cup qualifiers (Dunblair) Pool A Scotland 33, Tunisia 21; Tunisia 14, Yugoslavia 12; Pool B: South Africa 24, Denmark 7; South Africa 24, Denmark 7; Pool C: Czech Republic 14, Czech Republic 7; Kenya 14, Kenya 7; Pool D: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool E: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool F: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool G: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool H: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool I: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool J: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool K: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool L: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool M: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool N: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool O: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool P: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool Q: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool R: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool S: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool T: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool U: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool V: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool W: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool X: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool Y: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool Z: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool AA: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool AB: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool AC: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; Pool AD: Zambia 14, Zambia 7; 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New man at Twickenham Adebayo's mission on the wing 20



Wenger's derby day What Spurs can expect from Arsenal 22

RUGBY UNION

England's year of living disastrously

After 12 months of strife Twickenham's curtain rises again today. Frank Keating hears famous voices of hope and despair

EXACTLY a year and a week ago, on a sunny Saturday, the RFU unveiled its swish new amphitheatre at Twickenham as its pristine England XV to play the world champions South Africa in the historic first international match of the professional era.

terday, "horrendous, ridiculous, an utter nightmare". Barry John, one of the greatest players these islands have ever produced, concurs with his British Lions colleague. "It has been so fretful as to be utterly tragic," he says. "It has been 12 months of sheer waste."

to come to their senses." John and Hiller both rue the wasted 12 months. "Professionalism should have been announced with trumpets — and then aborted for at least a year," says John. "The players were nearly all working men. They needed time to chew over and weigh up the pros and cons."



Golden promise... the England squad do line-out drills at Risham

TOM JENKINS

Misleading signals on the northern line



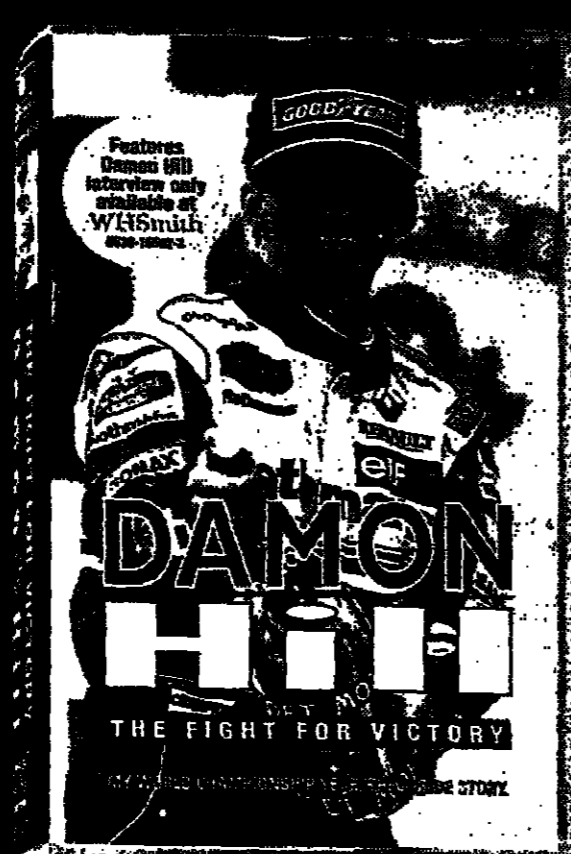
David Lacey

EGIL OLSEN has been at it again this week. Previously the gum-booted socialist philosopher who coaches Norway, he has been contented himself with criticising the England team for outmoded tactics. Now he insists that the Premiership is not all it is cracked up to be.

pool, Aston Villa and Blackburn, the case presented by Olsen is surely unanswerable. It should be remembered, however, that Olsen is a disciple of Charles Hughes, the Football Association's coaching guru whose belief in the direct approach, his critics would argue, did much to trap the English game in a long-ball straitjacket.

FIVE years ago Brazil would have been as likely as Shakespeare in Tombstone. Tyneside is still drooping over Glendon's goals for Newcastle against Manchester United and Ferencvaros. The spaghetti western has come to Chelsea. Even Anglo-Saxon Arsenal have added French sophistication to Dutch know-how.

On the WHSmith video, Damon Hill takes an extra 14 minutes to finish.



WHatever they're into, get into WHSmith

Cork out of Zimbabwe tour

DOMINIC CORK yesterday pulled out of England's cricket tour to Zimbabwe, citing personal problems. The 25-year-old Derbyshire all-rounder recently split up with his wife.

day, on the second leg of the tour to New Zealand. "I have some personal matters that need to be resolved," he said.

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,818

A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,818, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 2AX, by first post on Friday Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday December 2.

Crossword grid with clues and solutions. Clues include: 1 Wild flower of the heart? (6), 2 Feudal reverence, twisted at first, for 13 4 (6), 3 State helping to give Joker a laugh (6), 4 See 13, 5 Quiet worker in the 4 (8), 7 Case for movement round the islands (8), 8 Sentimental stuff at school: pure spirit's last (8), 13 A Vote for Roman Catholic-Israeli messiah, position of the current opposition (10,10), 15 Discipline for business operative? (4,4), 16 One piece of equipment in line will be enough (8), 17 Let audit be carried out at a high level (8), 19 Painter makes record of cheque at top of bank statements (6), 20 Playwright and painter on film (6), 21 Take a container of 4 (6).

Set by Auracaria. Across: 1 Pots of stone with direction to call round (8), 3 Tops of about one hundred copies (6), 8 Make up the loss of good order from meeting half-way? (8), 10 A window across the Channel (6), 11 Put right one within the church in the above (8), 12 Bad air reverses the purpose of morning (6), 14 Irishman interrupting the Father of the Houses? (10), 18 'To feed were best at home?' I shouldn't say that (10), 22 Nobleman deprived of right in 10 4 (6), 23 Lady's maid's lover or a giant at sea (8).

24 Counter in a vehicle without account (6), 25 Cold and distant light: I have to be back in prison (3-5), 26 Dredge the River Swan? (8), 27 Handbill to give more protection to campers (3-5). Down: 1 Wild flower of the heart? (6), 2 Feudal reverence, twisted at first, for 13 4 (6), 3 State helping to give Joker a laugh (6), 4 See 13, 5 Quiet worker in the 4 (8), 7 Case for movement round the islands (8), 8 Sentimental stuff at school: pure spirit's last (8), 13 A Vote for Roman Catholic-Israeli messiah, position of the current opposition (10,10), 15 Discipline for business operative? (4,4), 16 One piece of equipment in line will be enough (8), 17 Let audit be carried out at a high level (8), 19 Painter makes record of cheque at top of bank statements (6), 20 Playwright and painter on film (6), 21 Take a container of 4 (6).